

THE BOY 'EDITOR'



WINIFRED • KIRKLAND

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By Winifred Kirkland

THE BOY-EDITOR. Illustrated.

THE HOME-COMERS. Illustrated.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

THE BOY EDITOR

HAROLD CUE '13



(p. 102)

BURNING SHEET AFTER SHEET OF WRITTEN FOOLSCAP

THE BOY EDITOR

A Story for Boys and Girls

BY

WINIFRED KIRKLAND



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

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*The Frontispiece is from a drawing by
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THE BOY EDITOR

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

"MR. DORREL, the Mentor must be better than ever this year; that goes without saying."

The schoolmaster glanced at the clear, resolute gray eyes, at the clear, resolute red mouth, and twinkled a little, for Jeanie Campbell was always so earnest. She sat just as she had lightly flung herself on entering, sideways on the chair near his office desk, one arm running along the back, and one hearty square-shod foot well in evidence. Alan Campbell had done his best to rectify Dame Nature's mistake in making his only son a girl. Jeanie had only recently allowed her curly reddish hair to grow long enough to tie back, only recently allowed her seventeen-

year-old skirts to reach her ankles. Looking into her keen, unconscious eyes, John Dorrel sometimes wondered when Jeanie Campbell would discover that she was n't a boy.

"Yes," nodded Jeanie, "we Seniors this year have got to make the Mentor the best school paper that ever happened. O Mr. Dorrel, don't you love the feel of beginnings, the feel of each new school year, for instance?"

"Any special plans for the Mentor this year, Jeanie?"

"Plans before the election, 'Mr. Dorrel?" But the pink deepened beneath Jeanie's freckles, and the corners of her mouth dimpled, for why should either of them pretend that the school's choice of an editor was not already a foregone conclusion?

"It all depends on the editor-in-chief, and I always regard the Mentor as one of the biggest possibilities of the Senior year." The schoolmaster was earnest enough himself now, as he spoke.

"We all feel that way about it," answered Jeanie, grave, and a little tense, facing him with her clear look of responsibility realized and assumed, "and I — I mean we, all of us, or anybody who gets elected — will do our straight best, Mr. Dorrel."

"Mapleton Academy expects a good deal of an editor, besides editing," mused John Dorrel, as casually as if this were not a state of affairs he had for years labored to bring about. "I suppose that's why Sidney Lonesdale failed to get the Vote of Approval last May."

"We had to be honest about it," said Jeanie. "Sidney was n't the kind of editor we want, and we had to say so in the Vote. It is n't as if the Vote of Approval meant just the money."

For that the Vote of Approval should carry with it all money made by the Mentor management during the year was another thing that John Dorrel had brought about; for what was the use of a school, thought he,

if it did n't prepare boys and girls a little for the stiffness and sternness of the real world that was waiting for them?

"The editorship of the Mentor requires a public-spirited citizen," John Dorrel continued his casual musing; "and it's no fun, always, to be a public-spirited citizen."

"I think it is," cried Jeanie, "fun to be a public-spirited citizen!"

And the schoolmaster laughed, knowing well that exactly so must Alan Campbell's daughter have replied!

"I trust you to be that, Jeanie."

"But, Mr. Dorrel," reproved Jeanie, "I have n't been elected."

"Not yet, that's true, but perhaps you have some ideas ready."

"Oh, yes!" And Jeanie's cheeks and eyes began to glow, for she was one who required more worlds than books to conquer. "One thing I've thought of; I think it would be splendid if the Mentor should take up the new Academy building and make a regular

campaign of it. Perhaps we could get the whole town excited, and that would mean a lot of subscriptions outside of the school, and perhaps we'd really get the new building that way. Would n't that be splendid!"

Professor Dorrel, to Jeanie's puzzlement, was utterly silent, so that she repeated, "Would n't it be splendid! And we need a new school so much more than that town hall people keep talking about."

"We need both," said John Dorrel quietly.

"Oh, yes, of course, but we need the new school more. Look at this building!" and Jeanie flung out an emphatic hand toward the cracked ceiling and the crooked window. "It's fairly tumbling down on our heads!"

"Oh, no, not quite so bad as that, Jeanie."

"Well, anyway, the new school is one thing the Mentor could take up! and then there's another I've thought of. You know those 'Back-to-the-Farm' letters in the Chronicle signed 'Old Fogy'? Well, I think

it would be fun for the Mentor to answer them with an 'Out-into-the-World' series, a sort of debate between the town paper and the school paper. That would be another way of making the Mentor popular out in the town as well as in the school. Then I've a lot of other ideas for making it interesting to the school itself, for after last year something must be done about the Mentor!"

"Suppose," the schoolmaster paused, "merely suppose, Jeanie, that something *was* done about the Mentor, done earnestly and devotedly, and yet even so, suppose this year's editor also failed to get the Vote of Approval next May?"

"The school would n't be so mean, Mr. Dorrel!"

"You can never tell about people, you know." John Dorrel was examining the point of a pencil lying upon his blotter.

"Mr. Dorrel, do you mean that, perhaps, — do you mean that you think I like approval?"

"Don't you, perhaps, Jeanie, a little?" His dark, frank eyes twinkled at her wide and deepening gray ones.

"Per—haps," she admitted; "I never thought of it before. I always just go rushing ahead doing things. But ye—es, perhaps, Mr. Dorrel, I do like approval pretty well. At least, I like people to say, 'Thank you.'"

"'T is safer not, Jeanie, for some of us. We can't always tell how people are going to take us. Best not to count on thank-yous." He shrugged his shoulders genially. "The editorship of the Mentor is an education in people." Then, seeing in Jeanie's wide eyes his words take root against the future, he changed the subject abruptly. "By the way, Jeanie, how 's your boarder getting on?"

A quick laugh drove the gravity from Jeanie's lips. "He's one, is n't he, who needs an education in people? Mr. Dorrel, I honestly think he's the queerest boy I ever knew! Truly, truly, something's got to be done about that boy this year!"

“Well, did n’t I send him to board with the Campbells?”

Jeanie’s quick laugh rang. “He’s been with the Campbells two weeks, and I don’t see that either father or I have done him much good!” Then back came the earnestness, “It’s dreadful, really! Why, that boy has been in Mapleton Academy a whole year, and I don’t believe he knows six people in school by sight! He does n’t know a thing that happens, never comes to a meeting of any kind, and should n’t you think he’d be awfully lonesome that way?” A maternal depth softened Jeanie’s eyes. “But he does n’t seem even to know he’s lonesome. He does n’t see, does n’t hear, does n’t look. How can he go on being that way, Mr. Dorrel?”

“He must n’t!”

“And it’s a funny thing — while he always goes along with his head in a cloud and never seems to see any one anywhere, yet everybody somehow is always watching him. You can’t help it. Ever since his essay took Major

Sturtevant's prize last spring, and was printed in the Chronicle, everybody has watched Spencer Briggs and expected things of him; everybody in school and people in town, too, even father."

"Your father?" inquired John Dorrel, with quick interest.

"Yes, I think so; father has n't said so, of course, but father and I are pretty well acquainted, and I think, and hope, father is looking Spencer over. You know for years he's been watching the Academy Seniors, to see if some boy won't prove to be just what he wants. I wish it might be Spencer, but I'm afraid it won't be, — not if Spencer does n't wake up and let himself out a little."

"There is n't much ahead for Spencer if he does n't, I'm afraid," frowned John Dorrel.

"I don't know what's ahead for him after school, Mr. Dorrel. He has n't any money except what he can earn. I must say that I don't think that grandfather of his is very generous or good to him!"

"Isn't it better for Spencer to help himself?"

"No, I don't think so, Mr. Dorrel!" Jeanie's cheeks flamed with her emphasis. "I do not think so! I think it would help Spencer Briggs a whole lot if he'd sometimes let somebody help him with something!"

"Can't you manage that somehow?"

"No! And I've tried! Of course, I don't mean help with money. I mean Spencer Briggs needs to be *helped*, and to know he's being helped, too! He's too stuck-up!" The tempery red ringlets shook on Jeanie's forehead; then in an instant her heat was gone. "I'm awfully sorry for him, truly, but what can anybody do?"

"Jeanie, you must! You must think of a way to educate Spencer Briggs in people."

"Well, but, Mr. Dorrel, I'm trying and trying to think of a way. But what can you do for a boy when he does n't even see you? He does n't know anything about people. He does n't even know how to shake hands! And

it is n't only this year I think about, but next year. A boy that can study like that and think like that and write like that, — he can't go back to his grandfather's farm on Lost Mountain!"

Then both of them jumped at a deep-growled voice, "What's the matter with a farm on Lost Mountain?"

Hiram Scott, acting as office monitor on that Friday afternoon, and knowing the precedence of parents and guardians over mere pupils, had quietly admitted a tall old man as a mischievous intimation to Jeanie that her time was up.

"Anybody here got anything against Lost Mountain?"

John Dorrel had sprung up with frankly extended hand. "Nobody here has anything against Lost Mountain. It has sent us a prize pupil."

But the grim old face appeared unappeased. The bushy grizzled eyebrows drew down over the keen blue eyes. "It was the

lady I heard speaking!" The stranger regarded Jeanie aggressively.

In an amused effort at amenity, John Dorrel presented Jeanie, — "This is Miss Jeanie Campbell."

"And this," elucidated the keen old mouth above its fringe of beard, "is Stephen Pelham."

The old man and the girl stood regarding each other with level, challenging eyes. They were both of them given to direct thoughts and words. Jeanie was wondering where she had seen a forehead just like that, broad and high, with a space of white above a space of tawny sunburn.

"I have n't anything against Lost Mountain, Mr. Pelham," said Jeanie firmly, "except that it's no place for a boy as clever as Spencer Briggs."

The blue eyes slowly studied Jeanie from her topmost red curl to the square toes of her sturdy shoes. "Humph!" growled Stephen Pelham and turned from her abruptly to Professor Dorrel.

Both men had obviously silently dismissed Jeanie, but with her hand upon the door suddenly she turned around. Jeanie Campbell was not readily diverted when she was in the full flood of any thought. Now an idea had come to her, sweeping through her, shaking her! She stood with her back against the door, white and wide-eyed, seeking the schoolmaster's face. Her words reached his ear before she turned and went hurrying into the hall, — "Mr. Dorrel, I've thought of a way!"

John Dorrel turned to his visitor to find the strong old face all puckered with humor. Stephen Pelham jerked his head in the direction of the retreating footsteps.

"Fine girl! Whose?"

"Alan Campbell's."

"Editor Campbell's?"

"Yes."

"She like him?"

"Very."

"Blood tells," muttered Stephen Pelham; "blood tells."

"Your grandson takes his meals at the Campbells'."

The visitor started. "How d'you know I had a grandson? Ever seen me before?"

"Never. I knew you by the resemblance. The boy is very like you."

"The boy — like me! Spencer — like me!" There was the sound of a grim chuckle, then silence. "Yes, it's true. He's like me. But he don't know it." Again silence. "And he would n't want to know it either!"

John Dorrel lent himself silently to the abrupt, jerked-out confidences. He answered questions but asked none.

"Boy pretty well fixed this year? Pretty comfortable where he boards?"

"He sleeps here in the office as he did last year when he was janitor. But he takes his meals at the Campbells'. I fancy he's comfortable. The Campbells are good providers! You might step up and look the place

over. You'd find Spencer there at supper-time."

Stephen Pelham shook his head with a twitching, cynical smile. "I don't want the boy should lack this year. I want you to keep an eye to that, Professor. That's what I came to see you about. I want him to be able to put all his time to study. I don't want he should lack. But I'm not here to go calling on him. 'T would n't please him. Herbert Spencer Briggs don't take any great stock in his Lost Mountain relatives! Not enough to take a free cent from 'em, if he knew it. Need n't know it, if you'll manage. Guess he has enough for one while, though! I saw to that! Wages!" There was the sound of a slow, deep chuckle. "But I would n't have him know. Could n't say what he'd do if he knew. Like as not light out for good, like his father. Reckon you've had some experience trying to get inside some of these tight-mouthed young-uns?"

"I suppose you've tried to get inside?" John Dorrel smiled.

"Don't know where to begin to try. Did n't want to get inside at first, to tell the truth. Kind of got to not expecting much of him summer a year ago, when Mary first brought him home with her. Put him out in the fields then, but it did n't work — neither did he! Different last summer. Put his mind on it. Has a mind! Folks think so, don't they? That girl just now seemed to think he was smart."

"He is."

"Suppose you saw that essay of his last spring, 'The Two Sieges of the Civil War'?" Stephen Pelham tried hard to keep the glow out of his sharp old eyes, the crinkling smile from his grizzled lips. "Strikes me, Professor, *that was writing!*"

"It was!" the schoolmaster's enthusiasm answered the grandfather's.

"I've had an eye on him ever since that piece came out in the paper. I'm watching

him this year. I've my plans. No telling what he'll say to 'em, though. And it'll be for him to decide. It's his own job, his life is."

John Dorrel waited patiently for further explanation, but only the old low chuckle came. It was a matter of stimulation to a listener to attach Stephen Pelham's pronouns to their proper places, for he had a preference for omitting them. "Thinks I don't notice. Do notice. Found my stacks of old newspapers up-garret. Walked off with a lot of 'em. Studies 'em for the history, like enough. Suppose he thinks I don't know they're good for anything. Me! Wonder who he thinks kept 'em all in order all these years! It's been my way of getting off the mountain, — papers! Used to think I had to take a heap of 'em. Find one's enough since the Scotchman came. Don't take anything but the Chronicle now. Don't need so many papers, besides, since I don't care so much 'bout getting away from the mountain as I used to. Not so

bad, the mountain, when you once give in and make friends with it. Takes grit, though, more than some boys have, to stay by a farm on Lost Mountain. And sometimes, looking back, I wonder —” Here Stephen Pelham fell into a silence too long for even John Dorrel’s patience.

“You’ve been following the ‘Back-to-the-Farm’ letters in the Chronicle?” he asked at length. “They have interested me.”

“Have they? I’ve read ’em, yes. But mostly talk, don’t you think?”

“No, I’ve thought they were mostly sense.”

“Don’t know ’bout that. Don’t know ’bout that.” Again a thoughtful pause until the old man was recalled by the other.

“Your collection of newspapers must be most valuable, Mr. Pelham.”

There were no more silences! Stephen Pelham was off on his hobby. There was no pause in the flow of pithy, staccato sentences, scanty of pronouns. But the fact that he was

habitually chary of speech was plain from his confusion at the sound of suddenly outpouring feet upon the battered stairs, announcing the four o'clock dismissal of school and the fact that he, silent old Stephen Pelham, must have talked away a good hour and a half of the schoolmaster's Friday afternoon office hours. His rush for the office door was comically precipitate, and his retreat back into the room even more so. The chuckle was humorous but a shade nervous. "He almost caught me. Is he off for good now, d'ye think?"

"Off for an hour. I've at last convinced him of the need of exercise after school."

During the hour of parental interviews that followed, John Dorrel's thoughts kept up a steady undercurrent of effort to solve a problem. At five o'clock the problem himself knocked and entered. His bright spectacled eyes greeted the schoolmaster with the glow which they always had for him, no matter how unseeing they might be in other directions. Looking at him, Professor Dorrel

wondered what other changes the summer had made in Herbert Spencer Briggs in addition to the contrast of white and sunburn on his forehead, which made him look more than ever like his grandfather.

"Are you very busy, Mr. Dorrel?"

The Professor leaned back comfortably in his sagging chair, clasping his slim brown hands behind his head.

"All through with work for the week, Spencer, and ready for talk. Let's have some! And there are no Friday night janitor jobs to interfere with your time, either, this year. I warrant you don't miss them, eh, Spencer?"

"No, I am very glad to be relieved of them. My grandfather paid me this summer, for working on the farm, fifty dollars a month."

"Indeed? That, I believe, is reasonably good wages for a farm laborer in this part of the country!"

"Just the usual wages, he explained from the beginning. I would not have been willing to be under any obligations. I am very glad

to have the money, for I should not wish any outside responsibilities to interfere with my work this year. Such a very important year! Why, I feel as if almost anything might be made of this year, as it opens up before me; only last night I received a new suggestion; and then it's my last year with you, Mr. Dorrel."

The flattery of those glowing young spectacles brought a twinkle to John Dorrel's deep-brown eyes, as he hinted, "And your last year with a good many other people, too. And what's the new suggestion, Spencer, and where does it come from?"

"I want to talk it over with you, Mr. Dorrel. It has to do with my preparation for my career, my profession."

"That point is settled, then?"

"Yes, last night. At first I was going to be a philosopher because my father is one, and then last year, when I wrote 'The Two Sieges,' I wanted to be an historian. But now I've decided to be an editor."

A gleam came into John Dorrel's eyes; so one of his little plans was working, and Alan Campbell was already making himself felt!

"And your grandfather," commented John Dorrel absently, "is a farmer."

"Last summer, Mr. Dorrel," said Spencer apologetically, "I came to think that there's something in farming. It's not, of course, what any ambitious young man would choose."

"And you," reflected John Dorrel, "are an ambitious young man."

"I am, Mr. Dorrel! This year and every year of my life I mean to make just as much of myself as I possibly can."

"What do you propose to be up to especially, this year?"

"In addition to my school studies, — they are going all right, Mr. Dorrel?" Spencer interrupted himself anxiously; for ever since in the year of his janitorship the Professor had given him a much-needed lesson in window-washing, the boy had shared the

consciousness of every pupil of Mapleton Academy that it was perfectly possible for a good deal to be the matter with you in Professor Dorrel's opinion while you were quite unaware.

"You are all right at books, Spencer."

Reassured, Spencer continued, glowing, "I have a good deal of time left from my school studies, and at Mr. Campbell's suggestion I am going to devote it to a long essay, a monograph is the word, I believe, on the subject of editorial responsibility. I have had access to a number of old newspapers at my grandfather's, and Mr. Campbell suggests that such a — a theoretic study and research would be excellent preparation for my life work."

"Mr. Campbell said that?" The tone was startled. The suggestion did not sound like Alan Campbell. What mischief was that wise Scotchman up to now, thought John Dorrel.

"Yes, Mr. Campbell advises it. And he

even thinks that perhaps some day I can publish the — the monograph!”

Worse and worse; this really was too bad on the part of his editor friend; but John Dorrel had to smile, for sometimes his little plans worked altogether too well!

“Why be in such a hurry about publishing, Spencer? You’re — let me see — eighteen?”

“Mr. Dorrel, can any one be in too much of a hurry about a life work? I think one ought to set a goal before one, and then devote one’s self to reaching it!”

“Ever think of glancing round at the landscape while you’re running, Spencer? Or nodding ‘how-do-you-do’ to the friends along the track?”

“Friends?” queried Spencer blankly; “I do not see, Mr. Dorrel, how you can have time for friends if you are preparing yourself earnestly for a life work; a work, it seems to me, as I begin to have ideas for my monograph, of public service. I really was not planning to have any friends, not yet, Mr.

Dorrel. This seems to me such a very important year for self-preparation."

"It is an important year," John Dorrel slowly agreed. "Lots of people in the High Room seem to be feeling that way about it. There are a good many important matters buzzing about in the air, too. What's your opinion now, Spencer, of this affair of New School Building *versus* Town Hall?"

"About what, Mr. Dorrel?"

"There's a good deal of discussion rife in the town as to whether Mapleton shall build a new school or a town hall."

"What's your opinion, Mr. Dorrel?" asked Spencer quickly.

"What's yours, Spencer?"

"I never heard of the question before. I should want to think it over pretty hard."

"Suppose you do think it over, when you have time from your monograph."

"Mr. Dorrel," said Spencer suddenly, "the reason I want to publish a monograph is that perhaps my grandfather would read it.

Perhaps he'd think I amounted to something."

"Your 'Two Sieges' was printed."

"My grandfather did n't read it. He has never mentioned it."

There was something in the tenseness of the boy's lips that caused the schoolmaster to change the subject quickly.

"Another thing that's agitating the High Room in this important year is the coming election."

"Election?"

"The election of an Editor-in-Chief for the Mentor."

"The Mentor?"

"The school paper."

"Oh," said Spencer, politely indifferent.

"I am glad to say that I think the election is pretty sure for Jeanie Campbell." The Professor spoke to himself as much as to Spencer, with the teacher's relief at having one concern of this critical last year in the High Room in safe hands. "Jeanie knows

almost as much about editing a paper as her father does. Have you ever noticed Jeanie, Spencer?"

"I know there's a girl there, at the Campbells'; but no, I've never noticed her particularly."

CHAPTER II

THE ELECTION

THE Campbell sitting-room of an evening was a ruddy, comfortable spot. It had in the centre a roomy table with no fussy, feminine cover to hump itself up or to slide away beneath the shoving-about of papers or books or studious elbows. It had a merry pine-knot fire on these crisp fall evenings. It had wide windows without any curtains to make a man or boy impatient. It had bookcases to the ceiling and chairs that were meant to sit in. It had always a pleasant orderliness, as of two lads who had discovered that order was a more comfortable thing to live with than mess. The Campbell sitting-room had not one touch of femininity except Jeanie Campbell herself, but in the matter of downright "homeyness" Jeanie was enough!

In the middle of the table a green-shaded

lamp cast light on one's reading, but left the rest of the room to be illumined by the leaping fire. It was an easy matter for Alan Campbell to shove his chair back out of the circle of the lamp into the fitful firelit shadow, whence he could regard two young people quite as interesting to peruse at times as was Thomas Carlyle! One of these young people would from time to time forget Alan Campbell's presence, but Jeanie knew her father far too well ever to forget that he was there, bending the intentness of two caustic blue eyes on Spencer Briggs's spectacled face.

Now when a boarder is paying exactly two dollars a week for three hearty Pennsylvania meals a day, he is not always accorded in addition the privileges of the family sitting-room; but Jeanie Campbell knew that Spencer Briggs was a human boy, although he did n't, and she had not needed more than the hint of an open door to prove to the unconscious Spencer that the Campbell sitting-room was better equipped for evening study

than the chilly, ill-lighted school office. Spencer found a broad stretch of table before him, an excellent chair beneath him, and spent every evening at the Campbells' without a thought that any young feminine providence had thus ordained. Oh, there was enough happening on any evening in his own sitting-room to set Alan Campbell's lips twitching beneath his ragged, sandy mustache! To-night, however, the observant eyes were a bit more alert than usual, for the father surmised from the heightened brightness of her eyes and cheeks that his "son" had something special up her sleeve. There was a curious persistency, too, in the way Jeanie sought to break in upon Spencer's monologue, whereas she was usually his meekest listener, never betraying the amused observation tucked away under her eyelids.

Alan Campbell wondered what John Dorrel had been up to in sending this boy to board with them. Had the schoolmaster's little plan, whatever it was, been for the boy's

sake or the girl's sake? A suppressed laugh quivered in Alan Campbell's throat, for he was seriously considering trying a little plan of his own. From the looks of her, Jeanie, too, had her project. But whatever little plans anybody might have, her father was sure of one thing, the boy had never so much as seen the girl! And that was pretty dull of him, to be sure. How could he help seeing the pure pink and white of her face, the clear gray glow of her eyes, the gleam of live gold beneath the lamp? Yet perhaps a boy did n't notice a girl who did n't dress up. Now that he thought about it, Alan Campbell believed most girls did something more to their hair than Jeanie did, something more than catch the tangle back with a tight little bow at the neck. Jeanie never varied her uniform of immaculate, ill-fitting shirtwaist, and skirt obstinately short enough to allow freedom to the stride that matched her father's. Fathers of motherless girls have their moments of puzzlement; perhaps it was time Jeanie be-

gan to dress up a little. Then the keen blue eyes grew very soft at the thought that if the boy did not see the girl, Jeanie was not one to care whether any one saw her or not; she never thought about herself long enough for that!

Spencer's voice rolled out pleasantly through the firelit room. He was untying a fresh packet of yellowed newspapers.

"It is a glorious thing to be an editor in war-times! A position of such responsibility, such power! The power to turn a whole nation toward the right in a national crisis! Not that an editorial position is not always full of responsibility, in peace as well as war!"

"Yes," said Jeanie, "even the editorship of the Mentor is full of responsibility."

Spencer was opening out the papers each at the editorial page. He was intent upon the printed columns, and the pencil in his right hand felt about vaguely for a pad upon which to make jottings. Jeanie slipped one in place beneath the fingers, and the pencil drove

away furiously in the strong, rapid strokes of a strong, rapid brain.

"Don't you," persisted Jeanie, "think the editorship of the Mentor is a position of glorious responsibility?"

Spencer's spectacles turned about on her, vaguely disturbed. "Mentor?"

"The school paper, the Mapleton Mentor."

"Oh," Spencer smiled in frank amusement, "I was speaking of real editorship, of man's work."

"I guess you'd think the Mentor was real editorship," flashed Jeanie, "if you tried it!"

Spencer turned back to his papers. This girl at the Campbells' had never disturbed his evening study before! But now she kept at it. "Don't you suppose you'd think it was real editorship if you tried it?"

Spencer had returned to the year 1863. His instinct was to brush Jeanie's remarks aside like the buzzing of a mosquito. Eyes on his editorials, he murmured, seeking to

silence her, "Hardly what a man would call a man's work!" He smiled in polite tolerance; then, recalling something Mr. Dorrel had said, "A schoolgirl's work, perhaps, editing the Mentor. But the subject, Miss Campbell, which your father has suggested for my researches, and my preparation for my profession, have nothing to do with school papers."

"But could n't it?" cried Jeanie; "could n't the editing of a school paper be good preparation for editing a real one? Father, don't you yourself think so?"

Both young faces turned around to the silent observer in the shadow.

"Every man must find his own way of preparing himself for his profession," said Alan Campbell.

"You did n't prepare yourself for yours, father, by studying a lot of stale old papers!" Jeanie's eyes flashed reproach at a father who should have supported her in argument! "You did n't study papers, you studied

people, so as to know how to write for them!"

The Campbell girl was distinctly annoying this evening! Spencer strove to forget her in concentrated study. Again his right hand felt about vaguely on the table.

"Your eraser," murmured Jeanie, supplying it. She bowed her bright little head and peered up at the lamp-flame, then turned it higher, and pushed the lamp nearer to Spencer's eyes.

Spencer was already far away, and too much absorbed to bear any grudge against Jeanie for her unprecedented conversational interruptions, so that he burst forth presently, —

"Oh, an editor could even be a soldier in those days, he could fight for causes!"

The mosquito-like remarks began again, whereas Spencer Briggs wanted an audience, not an answer! "So could the editor of the Mentor fight for causes!" persisted Jeanie.

"What cause?" smiled Spencer.

"The new Academy building! That's a splendid cause!"

"I was speaking of real causes, great causes."

"So am I!" flamed Jeanie. "Is n't the cause of education always a great cause?"

Spencer returned to his work.

"And I'm sure Mr. Dorrel thinks so!" cried Jeanie.

This time Spencer was unexpectedly alert. "You're sure Mr. Dorrel wants a new school building?"

"Yes! But that was n't all that I meant. I'm sure Mr. Dorrel thinks that the Mapleton Mentor is a splendid opportunity, a splendid opportunity — for anybody — to have an education in people."

Spencer Briggs was an unexpected young gentleman. Sometimes he was unexpectedly cordial. At such moments the pleasantest of smiles would flash across his absent-minded face, — a smile gone again in a twinkling.

"I am glad," he said, "that you are to be

editor of the *Mentor* if you think so highly of the position."

"But I have not been elected."

"Mr. Dorrel says you're going to be."

"He's right, is n't he, Jeanie?" came her father's voice, full of pride and full of teasing.

But Jeanie was plainly flushed and embarrassed. "Nobody can count on an election beforehand," she said, springing up from her chair suddenly, and hurrying from the room.

She came back in a few minutes to set a large plate of cookies near Spencer's left hand. His happy munching lips expressed no gratitude, however, as Jeanie and her father presently withdrew, leaving Spencer in full possession of their midnight oil.

Five minutes later found them both in their before-bed custom, swinging their heels, seated on the stationary tubs in the kitchen, each munching an apple, silently, side by side. Alan Campbell peered around at his daughter with a twinkle, — "Cross at your old daddy about anything, Jeanie?"

Jeanie was a little cross at him, but her twinkle conquered, answering his, "Not cross at you if you'll help him, father."

"Help? How?"

Jeanie looked up at him, letting him read her thoughts. "Don't you think he'd be a good one — some day, perhaps — on a paper?"

Alan Campbell drew a long whistle. "You're a cool one, laddie! So I'm to take him on my paper some day, am I?" Another whistle. "He'll have to learn two or three things first, two or three! And one of them is, — but only one of them, mind, for there are more! — " here Alan Campbell looked into the face that Spencer Briggs had not yet so much as seen, that face so pink and white, so wide-eyed and sweet, — "one of the things that young man will have to learn is how to say 'thank you'!"

A father can perhaps afford to be a little devious and doubtful when a daughter thus frankly endeavors to engage him to offer a

seat in his editorial office to a callow youth from nowhere, but Hiram Scott was not Jeanie's father and he knew well enough that it behoved him to mind his manners when Jeanie fell upon him with a breathless and staggering project. The two had appropriated to themselves the afternoon privacy of the deserted Eighth Grade classroom. Hiram was swinging his long legs from a window-seat, while Jeanie sat on a desk hacked by two generations of jack-knives, her feet on the chair, and her hands clasping her knees tensely. There had come a pregnant pause during which Hiram looked out of the window and toyed with the cord of the torn window-shade. Jeanie was watching him with anxious but determined eyes. So far as in him lay, calm, impartial, and humorously observant as he was, Hiram Scott was feeling a little resentful. He did not see that the boy under discussion justified Jeanie's lively interest. Hiram and Jeanie had been chums ever since the day when Alan Campbell had

disembarked upon the platform of the Mapleton station, bearing in one hand a battered "Sartor Resartus" and leading by the other a little red-ringleted tomboy of a girl. This new boy had been on the scene exactly one year, and he had come from a vague and doubtful region known as the City. Nor was Hiram's doubt of Jeanie's scheme by any means altogether personal. Ever since, two years before, they had entered the High Room, Hiram Scott and Jeanie Campbell had been the means employed by Professor Dorrel when he wished to leaven the whole lump of his high school. What he could n't manage himself, he set Hiram and Jeanie to managing for him. The schoolmaster's reliance on them was a responsibility; Hiram Scott did not believe in sacrificing the whole school, as it might possibly turn out, to one boy, and Hiram had said this to Jeanie just before the pregnant pause in which they both now sat suspended. But what was a fellow to do when Jeanie looked like that, all one flame of energy and determination?

"Mr. Dorrel himself thinks it's a splendid opportunity," cried Jeanie, "to learn a lot of things a person needs to learn who's going to be somebody in the world."

"Who's going to be somebody in the world?"

"Spencer Briggs! It's in him, if we all help, this way."

Hiram spoke with the impartial calm of the observant. "I don't believe it's in anybody to be somebody in the world if he does n't begin by having eyes in his head. Spencer's got it bad, J.; Spencer's got far-sightedness so bad that he can't see anything but H. Spencer Briggs and his future."

"This would help him," pleaded Jeanie; "I know it will work out all right. I tell you, Hiram," she repeated, "Mr. Dorrel himself says it's a splendid opportunity."

"The Prof says he wants Spencer Briggs to have this opportunity?" demanded Hiram in astonishment.

"Well, no, he did n't say that exactly, and

you need n't tell him anything about all this quite yet, either; but *I* want Spencer Briggs to have this opportunity, and I'm going to bring it about, too! You know, Hiram," her voice was at once commanding and cajoling, "there are four days; we can do a lot of talking in four days. You know we can make the rest do it if we try, you and I, together."

"If we try!"

"Hiram, you're going to?"

No answer.

"Hiram, I thought you liked him."

"Do like him! So does the whole school!"

"And you know how clever he is!"

"He has a head and a half, I grant you that! There is n't anything against him for any job except that he's deaf and dumb and blind!"

"But he need n't be if we give him this chance! Don't you see, Hiram, how he needs the job?"

"But the job does n't need him, and so it's not fair to the job; that's what I'm kicking about."

"You leave that part to me, Hiram Scott!"

Hiram looked down at her in wide-eyed and frank amusement.

"Look here, J., don't you try to run the whole earth. You know perfectly well what happens when it does n't run the way you tell it to."

If you were a human boy and in the right of an argument, you could n't help a little relishing the sight when Jeanie Campbell visibly swallowed her temper! She did it now, then demanded on a choke, —

"Are *you* going to run the way I tell you to, Hiram Scott?"

Hiram swung himself down, indicating the conclusion of the interview. "Sure, J., I am! I'll help you. I'll talk up your scheme. But do you want to know why? Just to prove to you that it won't work!"

During the four days that followed, Professor Dorrel observed among the usual preëlection groups of talkers nothing to make him alter his optimistic conviction that the pres-

ent Third Year in the High Room was setting off remarkably well. He never allowed himself to be too early confident, yet this year several little plans were surely making promising progress. On this very afternoon he observed a cheering and suggestive little incident. At four o'clock the schoolmaster, gathering together his books and himself preparatory to leaving the High Room in complete possession of the important business of the day, had observed that on the announcement of the editorial election, Spencer Briggs had risen and with book-strap under his arm was making his way toward the door. Now Jeanie Campbell occupied the last seat before the exit. Spencer Briggs did not attain the door. He did not get past Jeanie's seat. The schoolmaster could not see exactly what happened, but he did see a confused and crest-fallen Spencer turn about and march back to his desk near the platform, and there re-seat himself in visible annoyance and bewilderment.

John Dorrel wondered why Jeanie, sitting very tense and alert, did not look at him as he strode his way out, for he had a merry twinkle of appreciation ready for her. As he tramped downstairs to his office, and afterwards, as he set himself to the afternoon tasks on his table there, the happy thoughts in his head mingled pleasantly with the papers he was looking over; for Jeanie Campbell was always a comfort and reliance, and Jeanie this year had in her charge two matters of serious concern to the schoolmaster, namely, the Mentor and H. Spencer Briggs!

Three quarters of an hour later, Professor Dorrel was still smiling, but not now at the way his little plans were working; he was smiling at the way they were not working! He was smiling also at Hiram Scott, on whose face he saw his own rueful amusement reflected.

“It’s Jeanie’s doing, all of it.” Hiram once again explained the events of the last half-hour.

"Did n't you help, Hiram?"

"No choice, when Jeanie wants a thing. But, Mr. Dorrel, had you never said anything to Jeanie, something that put the idea into her head?"

"If I did, I never meant to."

"Did n't you talk to her about the Mentor and about Spencer Briggs?"

"Yes! But not in combination!"

"Guess Jeanie thought of the combination! I wish her joy of it! and Spencer joy of it, too!"

"Spencer? It will be something of an education for Spencer!"

"Rather!" Hiram smiled; "Jeanie is Assistant. It will be an education for Spencer Briggs if he ever tries to do anything Jeanie Campbell does n't want him to, or not to do what she does want him to!"

John Dorrel laughed. "That something you've had experience of yourself, Hiram?"

Hiram chuckled. "Not I! I've known better than ever to try it!"

"Poor old Mentor!" sighed John Dorrel.

"Jeanie is Assistant Editor, so I'm not worrying about the Mentor too much."

"About Spencer, then?"

"No; about Jeanie. It's going to be a bigger education for Jeanie than for Spencer. Jeanie will take care of the Mentor all right, but she'll find it harder to help Spencer Briggs be an editor than I found it to help him be a janitor!"

Whatever John Dorrel's disappointed surprise at the failure of his plan for the editorship of his school paper, it was certainly to no one's astonishment so much as to his own that Herbert Spencer Briggs found himself Editor-in-Chief of the Mapleton Mentor.

CHAPTER III

THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

You can learn a good deal about a person in two months. Jeanie Campbell had learned, and was still learning. As time went on, however, and as editorship went on, her study of Spencer Briggs was narrowing itself to a single question: Why had he accepted his election? Why had he accepted it, if —

The time was the middle of November, the scene was the evening sitting-room. The fire was snapping merrily. Two young people sat at the table elbow-deep in papers. Each was busy with editorials; only Spencer's editorials belonged to the year 1860 and Jeanie's to the year 1910.

Spencer Briggs, as well as Jeanie, had learned some things in two months. He had learned not to be astonished when Hiram Scott or Sam Klein or Patrick Murphy or

Raymond Ellis or some other boy asked to accompany him on his after-school tramp. On these occasions Spencer would acquiesce in the suggestion, first with a bewildered stare, next with a sudden and bewildering smile, and then would promptly forget it altogether, trudging along for an hour either of fluent monologue on matters remote from Mapleton, or of silence equally remote. Still he gradually came to learn the faces and the names of these companions of his walks. Another thing he had learned was to consult Jeanie. The Campbell girl had proved so convenient that Spencer consulted her about many things; whether if you had fifty cents to spend on a cap, you could do better at Wright's or at Maloney's; what in the world his mother would like for a birthday present; did Jeanie think Æneas was a finer type of hero than Ulysses; but that on which Spencer chiefly consulted Jeanie was his monograph. Still another thing Spencer Briggs had learned was that on the two occasions when

in his capacity of Editor-in-Chief of the Mapleton Mentor it had been necessary for him to address the High Room as a body, it had given him a very curious feeling to observe that blur of faces resolve itself into one composite face, all burning eyes and taut attention, listening, listening to him! Yet whatever his relation to his afternoon companions, to Jeanie, to her father, to those merging faces of an audience, Spencer Briggs would never have thought of calling that relation by the name of any such frivolous distraction as friendship; neither would any of those others have thought of calling it that either, and for the best of reasons!

Through all these wintry evenings the monograph and the Mentor divided the attention of the Campbell sitting-room. Alan Campbell gave his advice to the monograph and his observation to the Mentor. On this particular evening Spencer announced to the room, beaming, "I've just finished the first division of my Editorial Responsibility; the

negative aspect, you remember, Mr. Campbell? This division of the subject proves the dangers and difficulties if an editor does not supervise and direct every department of his paper, have personal knowledge of its minutest workings, impress his personality on the entire paper from the weather report to the smallest advertisement."

"A little risky to impress his personality too much on the weather report," murmured Alan Campbell to a winking ember.

"I mean, Mr. Campbell, the principle! The principle is that whatever an editor is forced to delegate to an assistant, he should direct! He should have knowledge of everything. He should be on all departments of his paper himself. That's my idea of an editor's public service."

Jeanie looked up, showing eyes wide with that question she could not answer, then her cheeks flushed and her lids dropped at catching the dancing light in her father's gaze at her, as he said:—

"Exactly right, Spencer, I'm glad you preach that principle."

"Spencer," said a frankly weary voice from the Mentor end of the table, "if you have finished your first division, can you help me with this proof? It's an awful mess."

Spencer glanced at the clock. "I can give you exactly fifteen minutes, from nine-forty-five to ten."

"Father," grumbled Jeanie, "that new man you've got for the job printing is no good at all. He can't spell anything. He's got every proper noun wrong in the 'Letter from a Traveling Kitten.' Just look at this galley, Spencer!"

"'Letter from a Traveling Kitten!'" exploded Spencer; "what in the world is that?"

"It's the leading feature for the Primary Department. The Primaries never had anything special before. The kitten writes from all the places they study in their geography,

and that kitten has brought in thirty new subscriptions."

"The Primary," said Spencer lightly; "oh, that's your department."

"It's one of my departments, yes!"

The week preceding the monthly issue of the Mentor was apt to be a trying one for Spencer, and he did not now intend that Jeanie should encroach upon his time before nine-forty-five. He relaxed into an absorbed silence, broken in upon by a bubbling little laugh from Jeanie, as she read manuscript. "Oh, this is good! This chapter is really good! I wonder who did it! I wonder what's going to happen next at Slattery's!"

Spencer was unresponsive, but Alan Campbell answered, "By the way, whose idea was it, that notion for a serial in competitive chapters, and anonymous?"

Jeanie looked over at her father's keen eyes in visible reluctance. "I — I — guess it was my idea, but Spencer thinks it's all right, don't you, Spencer?"

"What?"

"The serial 'What Happened at Slat-tery's'! You know about that, our scheme for having competitive chapters come in each time, unsigned, and choosing the best for publication. Ten people tried this time. Did n't you read the manuscripts, Spencer? I left them in your desk at school for three days."

"Must have forgotten them. Fiction is your department."

"I am beginning to appreciate the scope of Jeanie's departments," remarked Alan Campbell.

"But father, father," cried Jeanie hastily, "the whole paper is Spencer's really. And he writes the first editorial. Have you got it done, Spencer? Everything else is in proof. What is the subject of your editorial this month, Spencer?"

"I thought I could rearrange a few paragraphs from my monograph, calling the editorial 'The Editor in Peace and in War.'"

"Oh," sighed Jeanie, "I thought perhaps you would write something a little nearer home this time."

"I could n't. I've been finishing the first division of Editorial Responsibility!" Spencer excused himself with emphasis and irritation.

"May I be allowed to read it?" suggested Alan Campbell with ready interest.

Shining-eyed Spencer pressed a pile of fluent foolscap into the outstretched hand. In the last two months Spencer Briggs had added to the list of the three men he admired a fourth,—Alan Campbell. Clearly Alan Campbell, like John Dorrel, and like some one else Spencer knew, had chosen to be a big man in a little place. Also the Mapleton Chronicle was a big paper in a little place, and made its courier flights over all the State, and had even been quoted in New York, and thus quoted had even been read by Spencer's own philosopher father. The discovery that his father had read Alan Campbell would

have been enough to win Spencer's respect, but it was not so important as the discovery that Alan Campbell had read his father, every one of the six books! Few things could have flattered Spencer Briggs more than Alan Campbell's interest in the monograph, but Jeanie eyed this interest with equal doubt and hope. You could never be sure what such a sharp-eyed father was up to! But anyway it was a very remarkable monograph and a very remarkable boy who was writing it; any father with any eyes at all would have to acknowledge that!

The circle in the Campbell sitting-room was frequently, as now, increased by one who entered with quick, quiet step, and unannounced, in good neighborly Mapleton custom. Hiram Scott pushed a third chair to the green-lighted table and began to disgorge important matters from his vest pockets, snapping off rubber bands and methodically arranging his papers. He glanced at Jeanie's end of the table and

unobtrusively appropriated a pile of proof, running an accurate blue pencil along it, without any interruption to conversation. The correcting of proof was not, strictly speaking, the work of the business manager of the Mapleton Mentor, but, for a boy not in the least officious in disposition, Hiram Scott always did manage to attend to a good deal of business not, strictly speaking, his own. Tired Jeanie's animation returned at sight of Hiram, for he had come about weighty concerns. But did the Editor-in-Chief even remember what these were? for he was giving indications of retreat to the privacy of the school office! Hiram, reading, laid down his proof-sheet, for a low laugh, "These are good, these 'Rhymes by our Reporters'! Who's doing them?"

"Patrick Murphy does some. I've done a few myself." Jeanie acknowledged the latter fact reluctantly.

"I found Mr. Dorrel himself chuckling over them the other day. I say, friends and

fellow-editors, the Prof's mighty pleased with the Mentor this year; he told me so."

"Is he?" breathed Jeanie; "that's good, is n't it, Spencer?"

"Is he?" echoed Spencer, alert with pleasure; "I — I hope to make a good thing of it, a little later on, when I've a little more time from my monograph."

"He's specially pleased with the 'Visitors from the Past' series; he's glad to have the work in the English class coming out that way, and he says he really believes Chaucer would have written just such a letter about it if he'd visited Mapleton Academy."

"Whose idea, Jeanie," said Alan Campbell's voice from the shadow, "that 'Visitors from the Past' series?"

Jeanie was on her guard before two now! "Spencer wrote the Addison one," she answered evasively.

"But it's not only the Prof who's pleased with the Mentor. We're spreading out far beyond the school. I've calculated that the

answers to Old Fogy's 'Back to-the-Farm' letters in the Chronicle have brought us in sixty-seven subscriptions. I wonder who Old Fogy is, anyway."

"I don't myself know who he is," said the editor of the Chronicle. "The letters come to me signed only in that way. My own idea is that the author is no Old Fogy at all, nor even a farmer himself. He knows too much about writing to be either."

"Keep up your 'Out-into-the-World' column, Spencer!" cried Hiram; "it's bringing in a lot of money. The Vote of Approval will carry with it solid cash this year, when May comes."

"I never think of the Vote of Approval," replied Spencer haughtily.

"Well, I do!" exclaimed Jeanie; "and I think you might, Spencer, for the Vote of Approval means more than money!"

"It will mean more than money this year," murmured Alan Campbell, with a meaning of his own.

"Yes, the Vote of Approval will mean a good deal this year," echoed Hiram Scott, also with a meaning of his own.

But Spencer Briggs was thinking of something else, and that, for once, not his monograph. He was grave and intent.

"I think Old Foggy's 'Back-to-the-Farm' arguments are pretty hard to answer," he said.

Jeanie's temper could not help flashing testily. "I don't see that you've ever tried to answer them!" Then the overworked Assistant Editor could have bitten her quick tongue, for she caught the gleaming humor of Hiram Scott's eyes meeting her father's.

"On the contrary, I've been trying to answer them, in my mind, ever since last summer."

With sudden penetration and anxiety Jeanie exclaimed, "You don't mean to say, Spencer Briggs, that any clever boy, with all sorts of chances open to him, would want to go back to a farm, — want to!"

"Would the farm want *him* is the question I've been trying to answer!"

There was in Spencer's face a manly dignity and intentness that momentarily caught Hiram's attention as he said, continuing their causes for self-congratulation, "But where the Mentor is taking the whole school and town by storm is in its second editorials; they're lively enough to jump off the page, and they're waking the whole place up, and they'll get us our new school building if anything will. You ought to hear the buzz at the post-office! Town Hall *versus* School, School *versus* Town Hall, everybody's talking, and when the debate comes off — I tell you, Spencer," Hiram's eyes grew alive with mischief, — "your new academy campaign is stirring the whole town! Mapleton always did pay a good deal of attention to what goes on at school, but now! everybody's reading you now, and when at the debate everybody hears you talk, why, our new school is a sure thing!"

"I don't write those editorials," said Spencer.

"Whose idea, by the way, that debate between the representatives of the town and the school, Town Hall *versus* New Academy?" Alan Campbell made the inquiry of the fire; but got no answer from his daughter, who, again evasive, said, "Spencer's going to write the new academy articles as soon as he gets time. And he's going to lead the debate on our side. We're going to have it in January, just when things are usually dull at school. We're going to be lively in our mid-winter numbers; and as for the debate, if that does n't once and for all make people stop talking town hall for this town before we've got a decent school building! We've got six weeks to work up the debate, and we're working!"

"Do you really think the town needs a new school more than a new town hall?" It was Spencer's quiet question.

"Do you mean," flamed Jeanie, "that you

don't believe it does? After all we've done and said and written! And when — when" — she caught her breath in the intensity of her excitement — "when the whole thing is making the Mentor so popular and bringing in so many subscriptions!"

"Is that what we're doing it all for," inquired Spencer blankly, "for subscriptions?"

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Jeanie, "of course not. We're trying to get a new school because we need a new school!"

"Do you think we need a new school?" Spencer looked to Hiram; "why?"

Hiram looked steadily into Spencer's steady, questioning eyes, as men look. They had both forgotten Jeanie.

"Yes, I think we need a new school building, because of Mr. Dorrel. Mr. Dorrel has made a school for Mapleton. I think the least Mapleton can do for him is to make a building for it."

"I think," said Jeanie, "that, whether we

get it or not, our working for a new school-house is our way of showing Mr. Dorrel that we care for the things he cares for."

"Yes," agreed Spencer quietly, "one would like to show him that."

Seeing Hiram firmly established at the table for a long evening of Mentor business, Spencer presently gathered together his notes and papers, and withdrew to the less social school office, having completely forgotten that little promise about the proof. But Jeanie had not forgotten, and the fact tended to make her all the more sharply on the defensive with the two keen gentlemen with whom she was now left alone. Hiram glanced from the pile of Mentor matters on the table before them toward the door whence the Editor-in-Chief had disappeared. Only his eyes dared to say, "I told you so," but that look was enough to make Jeanie flame out,

"You said my scheme would n't work, Hiram Scott! But see how successful the Mentor is. Is n't my scheme working?"

"*You* are working. Is your scheme working?"

"You wait for the debate, Hiram Scott. You know how well Spencer can speak; you've heard him. You just wait for the debate; you'll believe he's worth something then, you and the whole school! Wait!"

"We are waiting," said Hiram quietly.

"And, father," Jeanie besought, looking toward the monograph sheets in her father's hands, "can't you see how Spencer can write? Well enough for a really truly editor. Don't you see that he can?"

Alan Campbell, rising now to seek his evening apple in the kitchen, raised his hand in passing to twitch a curl of Jeanie's tied-back tangle, then dropped his arm in surprise, for the tangle was no longer there! It was done up in a young-lady-like mass on Jeanie's head! In response to her appeal to him, Jeanie's father merely echoed quizzically Hiram's words, "I am waiting."

Thus when you've undertaken to make an

editor of a boy, you stick up for him; but if you're an honest young person and clear-eyed, some day you will ask a question that you've suppressed for two months, yourself like the two others, waiting. The very next evening, when Jeanie and Spencer were alone, out popped Jeanie's puzzlement.

"Spencer, why did you accept the election to the Editor-in-Chief of the Mentor? Why did you accept it, if —"

"Why, I thought I could squeeze a little time for it in my odd moments, and it came to me that even a school paper might help me to learn how to be an editor some day."

"You're an editor now!" said Jeanie.

CHAPTER IV

THE MONOGRAPH

“COME, Spencer. Have you forgotten?” The tap of reminder on Spencer’s shoulder, bowed above his school desk, was all the sharper because Jeanie had observed the sheets under Spencer’s hand. Spencer had no business to bring the monograph to school, and this on debate day! During the last six weeks Jeanie Campbell had suffered almost more than patience could endure.

Spencer pushed aside his monograph and followed Jeanie up the aisle to the platform, for the editors of the *Mentor*, on this momentous morning of the town debate, had a before-school appointment with Professor Dorrel. They took their seats now, one on each side of his busy table.

In the long, bleak High Room, where upon the ceiling blotches of patched plaster and one

gaping hole of laths made strange maps for young geographers to study; where the windows went up only with a variety of angles and with a variety of efforts, and chiefly served, since John Dorrel would have them constantly open, as escape for the heat that rose from the windy, echoing registers; where the walls showed no decoration but a streak of brown stain from a leak in the roof, and the fading images of Washington and Lincoln, and in the corner by the platform the valiant flag long ago presented to the Academy by the local G.A.R., — in this long bleak High Room, at a battered table, on a little platform that creaked to his every movement, sat John Dorrel, the Mapleton schoolmaster. In his deep, quizzical eyes there burned forever the fires that must forever kindle the hearts and brains of boys and girls to fare forth on brave Columbus adventuring.

The High Room was slowly filling with youngsters who trickled in. The schoolmaster had his nod for each and his quick

glance to see what morning face each was bringing from home on this particular day; yet his attention never wavered from the boy and girl flanking his table. All the faces on this January morning were eager and alert.

Jeanie Campbell, all a-shine, swept the expanse of the High Room, and then came back to gaze with dream-bright eyes at the schoolmaster's face.

"Mr. Dorrel, I can hardly wait for to-night! Just think what it may mean, a whole splendid new building for our school! Have you looked over Spencer's notes, Mr. Dorrel, for his speech? We've worked like anything over them. Are they all right?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dorrel quietly, and drew from his desk drawer the outline sheets of Spencer's speech, to which he had added various blue-penciled notes.

"Do you yourself find the arguments for our new building convincing, Mr. Dorrel?" inquired Spencer anxiously.

"Yes; but it is n't a question of convincing me, but of convincing the town."

"Mr. Dorrel does n't need to be convinced," cried Jeanie. "Look! Is n't the old building enough to convince any of us of the need for a new one!"

Mr. Dorrel now began to go over the outlined pages, commenting in low-voiced, sure criticism. Jeanie leaned forward on an eager elbow. Spencer kept glancing off, window-wards, with remote and tight-drawn brow. And all that schoolroom, under courteous veil of attention to their own affairs, kept watching the three upon the platform.

"This is good," said John Dorrel quietly; "this argument is clever, effective, good. As the Mentor itself is clever, effective, good. I congratulate you on both, Spencer."

"There, Spencer!" cried Jeanie, all in a flame of triumph and pride.

Spencer Briggs received John Dorrel's words without one syllable of gratitude, for he was looking at Jeanie in a confusion of

thought such as his clear young head had never before experienced. It was clear that Mr. Dorrel took the Mentor seriously, as seriously even as Jeanie did!

“Spencer’s outline is all right, then, you think, Mr. Dorrel?” Jeanie went on; “but wait till Spencer talks his speech. When he speaks, people listen! They’ll listen to-night! Spencer Briggs, do you hear one word I’m saying?” The abrupt irritation of the question was not lost on John Dorrel’s ear, but it drew not one word from the abstracted Spencer.

But to turn from Spencer Briggs to Mr. Dorrel was to turn Jeanie’s thoughts, spoken now with a breathless catch, —

“We’ve worked six weeks over this debate. We’ll win or die! And we’ll win the new schoolhouse or die, too. But — but — suppose we don’t, Mr. Dorrel; you’ll know anyway what it was all for, all we’ve tried to do? It’s for you, to show you that we understand just how you care.”

The twinkle softened suddenly in the schoolmaster's eyes. "That you understand just how I care?"

"Just how you care about us all. I guess I know how it feels to work and work over people. I just guess I understand how you feel, Mr. Dorrel!"

The schoolmaster's voice was musing and gentle. "That's a good deal to expect of any pupil, Jeanie, to understand how I feel."

"And Spencer understands, too, and appreciates, Mr. Dorrel. That's why he's going to put it all into his speech to-night."

Jeanie looked at Spencer. Spencer looked at the blackboard beyond her head.

"Spencer, can't you say something?"

"About what?"

"Why, about getting the new schoolhouse for Mr. Dorrel?"

A pause during which Spencer's thoughts came back from the blackboard, for he had learned to be a little afraid of Jeanie.

“No, I don’t think I can, before to-night,” he said.

It invariably seemed to John Dorrel’s pupils that relentless clock-hands closed every conversation with their schoolmaster before it was half over. Professor Dorrel rose now. “That’s all for the present?” he inquired, going to pull the primitive dangling bell-rope for First Bell.

An instant the two young people, risen now, stood each at the side of the table, facing the room. An instant the eyes of the school were raised to them, in a glance that repeated what all glances had been expressing for exactly four months past, namely this, of the two “boys” standing up there, which, Jeanie Campbell with her keen, compelling eyes, her eager lips, all her flashing friendliness, or Spencer Briggs, with his frankly far-away eyes, his firm, likable mouth, and no friendliness whatsoever, — which of the two, pray, was really the Editor-in-Chief of the Mapleton Mentor?

"I say, Jeanie," Spencer detained her by a window, "I've got to a puzzling spot in my second division of the monograph. You know the part about an editor's social relation to the community, his responsibilities as a man as well as an editor? I have the manuscript in my desk, for I thought you'd have time to go over it with me at recess. Will you?"

"You brought the monograph with you on the debate day? After all the work I've put on this debate! You thought I'd go over the monograph with you at recess?" The flame of sheet lightning that sprang from Jeanie's eyes to Spencer's made him wince. "You thought I'd go over it with you to-day? Well, I won't!"

"Look out, Spencer! And look out, Jeanie!" Thus Hiram Scott, but unheard, for he merely addressed his Latin grammar.

Jeanie strode to her seat in such visible wrath as made that observant schoolroom turn from her to Spencer, who even thus

quickly had forgotten Jeanie's anger in his many thoughts, swinging, as those thoughts were now, between Jeanie's Mentor and his own monograph. Spencer glanced up to meet those lines of eyes, looking at him, and suddenly smiled his delightful and always unexpected smile, for he liked looking into those eyes, and he remembered he was going to make a speech that evening, and he liked making speeches.

Professor Dorrel and Hiram Scott were not the only gentlemen who were wondering how much longer Jeanie's temper was going to hold out. It had been an entertaining winter for Alan Campbell, this watching two young people change, under his very eyes. He had been content so far to be an observer of the process, but before dinner was over on this day he had decided to be an actor, too, to find out once and for all something he wanted to know about this young man, H. Spencer Briggs.

It was a restless Jeanie at noon that day,

one who forgot to eat the holiday dinner she'd taken pains to have stout Dutch Minna provide. It always did Jeanie good to see Spencer eat. That was one way in which her tall protégé was thoroughly satisfactory. She regarded him from head to foot with a critical maternal eye.

"You'll remember to dress up to-night, Spencer? The whole town is going to be there, and all the school is going to dress up, so that, — why, so that people will think we're worth putting into a better building. I'm going to fix up myself, if I can possibly get time before eight. I have n't had a minute to do up my hair lately. Now, Spencer, remember, dress up!"

"In what?"

The question produced a blank silence. "Well, then, brush them!" sighed Jeanie at last; "brush what you've got on, hard."

"All right," said Spencer, returning to his fricasseed chicken, only to be recalled by a wistful "Spencer?"

“What is it?”

“Spencer, won’t you remember to-night to — well, sort of try to feel as if you were a pretty grand person, standing up there to argue for a big thing. So much is at stake to-night!”

“The new schoolhouse?”

“Yes, but that’s not all. Some — some people — are at stake, too, perhaps, a little. The town expects a lot of the school, and the school expects a lot of you, Spencer, our Editor-in-Chief. Spencer, does n’t it ever come into your mind that if — if you should get the Vote of Approval in May, it would be worth something?” Jeanie’s serious pleading suddenly changed to a cheery laugh. “Why, one part of it, the smallest, is money; you could have two suits at once if you got the Vote of Approval in May.”

“I never think of the Vote of Approval.”

“Mr. Dorrel does!”

Spencer looked up in surprise. “Why?”

“Because it means that an editor has

fulfilled the expectations people have had of him!"

"People?" queried Spencer. "Do you mean the school?"

"Of course I do. Are n't we all people, people who expect something of you?"

"They are boys and girls," said Spencer loftily, "and I know only two or three of them. By 'people' I mean, — well, people are those, for instance, who will read my monograph some day, provided it has a chance to be published. You do think I can get it published some day, don't you, Mr. Campbell?"

Alan Campbell's heavy reddish eyebrows drew down over penetrating eyes. "Yes, I think it is possible, Spencer."

The words sounded harmless; it was the tone that worried Jeanie. "Father," she inquired anxiously, "you're coming to Brown's Hall to-night, are n't you, surely, to hear Spencer?"

"I'm coming to hear you all."

“We’re depending most on Spencer. Hiram will be good, though he’ll be too slow, and Raymond Ellis will be good, too, though he’ll be too quick. The people on the town side are pretty strong; old Mr. Judson Hyde, he’ll use very few words, but they’ll hit the nail, and Major Sturtevant is rather long-winded, but he always stirs people up dreadfully; but Howard Stephenson is the most dangerous one of the three. It’s only five years since he was an Academy boy, and here he is arguing against our new building to-night, and talking town hall high and low all the time!”

“Do you blame him, really? Seeing that Brown’s Hall is all the place there is for the big meeting to-night, and it’s been almost condemned by the building inspectors. Don’t you think yourself this town needs a town hall?”

“Why, Spencer Briggs, don’t you remember your own arguments for to-night? Of course Mapleton needs a town hall some day,

but it needs a new school first! 'A place for education first, and then a place to use it,' we've got that down in our notes. And 'Mapleton Academy is the honor of the county, the Mapleton Academy building is the dishonor of the town!' Don't you *believe* your own speech? Think of our old building as a building for Mr. Dorrel!"

"Oh, I know what's in my speech!"

"And, Spencer, you do intend to distinguish yourself to-night, to show people what's in you?"

"I don't believe I've thought about that part at all."

"Spencer Briggs, don't you ever care what anybody thinks of you?"

"Yes," said Spencer unexpectedly, "but he is n't going to be there to-night."

"Well, we're going to be there, all the school and all the town. And if you don't care, you ought to! You ought to care for your responsibility to people who've elected you editor, and helped you, and got you this

chance to speak, and watched you and worked over you, and everything —”

“Why, who’s done all that? I was n’t expecting anybody to look after me like that, and nobody has. I don’t see that I’m particularly responsible to anybody. It has all just happened.”

“If you took a little more interest, Spencer, it would be” — Jeanie grew a little vague — “it would be one way of saying ‘thank you.’”

“To whom?” asked Spencer wonderingly.

Jeanie’s humor helped her, it touched her wistful tremulous lips, making them suddenly wise and whimsical. “Oh, to no one in particular, Spencer! It’s as you say. It has all just happened.” Then Jeanie became aware that for once she had forgotten her father looking on, and, flaming with irritation at herself, she jumped up to hide from him any more feelings that might be betrayed. In her father’s eyes she saw that he was thinking of a sentiment that he had previ-

ously expressed, — “That young man must learn to say ‘thank you.’”

“I’ve a hundred things to do!” Jeanie was flying about, snatching up coat and hat, and stamping into her low rubbers in boy fashion. “And Spencer, don’t, don’t, don’t forget that you are to meet Hiram and Raymond at the schoolhouse for the last preparations at four. We girls have got to go to Brown’s Hall to fix the chairs and fill those old glass lamps — such a smoky old hole for us to have to meet in. And I’ve a hundred other things to do that I’ve forgotten, but if I run fast enough probably I’ll run into some of them on the way. Good-bye!”

But it was no part of Jeanie’s forgotten programme that, an hour later, she should collide with a tall old man, who twinkled at her grimly, muttering, “The Scotchman’s girl again!”

Now, just half an hour before Jeanie’s collision, a tall young man had avoided a collision for himself with this same old man by

tumbling into the nearest doorway. Here, blinking and bewildered, Spencer Briggs found himself among tall, clattering presses, black and greasy and redolent of ink. He gazed about in this dusky place he had never before penetrated to find a shirt-sleeved, red-topped man who looked vaguely familiar, regarding him from an old armchair before a cluttered inky desk. Spencer blinked at him from behind his big spectacles.

“Did you want to see me, Spencer?” inquired Alan Campbell.

“No,” said Spencer Briggs.

“Well, Spencer, since you thus happen in, I believe I do want to see you. I have just made up my mind to run up to New York to-morrow on business. If you could get your monograph in shape a little, I’d be glad to take it along with me and let a publisher friend of mine have a look at it. I know it’s a busy day for you to-day. Do you think you could let me have some part of the manuscript?”

“It needs copying.”

“Will you have time, do you think, to-day, Spencer?”

Alan Campbell's eyes probed Spencer's spectacles for a full half-minute before Spencer's answer came.

CHAPTER V

THE DEBATE

WHAT should old Stephen Pelham do but face about, and trudge silently by Jeanie's side as if in sudden resolution? "Let's drop in here," he said in gruff command when they were in front of the Twin Pines. There were other hotels in Mapleton with impressive false fronts of seeming brick, but Stephen Pelham, as his fathers had done before him, patronized the Twin Pines, with its two tiers of sagging porches and its windy, fading sign-board. He tramped ahead of Jeanie into the inn parlor with its worn brown oilcloth, its dusty marble-topped table, its framed funeral wreaths on the low walls. Stephen Pelham thrust a fresh chunk of wood into the sheet-iron stove, clanging the door shut with a large boot toe. It was a cheerless room. There was bright January sun outside,

but inside no sunshine but Jeanie's bright hair and cheeks and eyes.

"Well," said Stephen Pelham, turning about, "how 's your boarder?"

And behold, the wondering Jeanie saw on the grizzled old face the same look she sometimes perceived on the face of H. Spencer Briggs and described to herself as "hungry without knowing it." It so happened that, if Stephen Pelham had not perceived his grandson fleeing from him into the Chronicle office, he would probably himself have found some means of fleeing from his grandson.

"Spencer's all right. Spencer's going to lead the debate for the new school building at Brown's Hall to-night."

"That's what I'm here for," said Stephen Pelham.

"It's going to be great, for Spencer knows how to talk!"

"And to write! Take his paper. Knows how to run a paper. Wonder where he learned. Look at his articles! Editorials for

the new school building enough to stir the State! And 'Out-into-the-World' letters, enough to clean the farms of every boy there is! Don't agree with either lot of arguments myself. But they're good writing. Boy has a head. Did n't know he had so much. Must be waking up. Don't agree with a word he writes, but like it."

A queer little voice asked, "Do you like the first editorials, Mr. Pelham?"

"So, so. Good, yes, very good. But not on the spot, that's all. Nothing like the rest of the Mentor. 'Out-into-the-World' letters take all Old Fogy's wits to answer 'em, don't you think so?"

"I don't think Old Fogy does answer them, but Spencer thinks Old Fogy's letters are better than ours."

"Spencer thinks that?"

"Yes."

"Spencer's a fool, then."

"Of course he is," expanded Jeanie. "He says that part in Old Fogy's letter two weeks

ago, 'Live deep enough anywhere and you'll live big enough,' — Spencer says there's no answering that, really."

"Writes pretty good arguments for a fellow who don't believe 'em, then," mused Stephen Pelham. "I'd have sworn the fellow who wrote those 'Out-into-the-World' letters believed 'em."

"She — he — he — does!" stammered Jeanie.

"I'd have thought Spencer believed 'em anyway from all I've ever seen of him and a farm."

"He ought to! For of course it's right for every clever boy to have all the chance out in the world that he can, the biggest chance to work up in his profession, to the very top! a boy like Spencer!"

"I have my plans for Spencer!"

"So have I, Mr. Pelham!"

Jeanie faced the old man with flashing eyes of challenge. She had adopted her boarder and she was bringing him up, and she had no

mind to have a mere grandfather interfering with Spencer Briggs's career!

Stephen Pelham suddenly flung forth a big laugh of pure humor. "Spencer know that you've got plans for him?"

Flaming red at his amusement, but repressing her anger, Jeanie choked out the words, "I have n't told him yet. I'm waiting."

Stephen Pelham grew instantly grave. "I have n't told him yet either. I'm waiting, too. For to-night, for one thing."

Jeanie was looking at Spencer's grandfather with an anxious question trembling to her lips.

"Spencer got any plans of his own for himself, do you think?" asked Stephen Pelham.

"Oh, yes, plans for ten years from now. You know how he is. But my plans for him are for this very next year."

"So are mine."

"Mr. Pelham, what are yours?"

Stephen Pelham looked at Jeanie with a twinkle in his deep-set eyes. "I'm not telling," he said.

Jeanie's lips opened, then shut in a tense irritation.

Stephen Pelham regarded her with his deep twinkle. "Not very well pleased, are you?" he said; "what do you think of the boy's old grandfather, I wonder."

"I think," said Jeanie, looking him squarely in the eye, "that you're the kind of man who might some time make me very mad, as Spencer does. And I don't believe, somehow, that you've ever been very good to Spencer."

There it was again, that look that was "hungry without knowing it." "Perhaps not," muttered Stephen Pelham; "perhaps not." Then the ragged, grizzled lips parted in a smile that was as sudden and surprising as Spencer's own. "But I guess I know some one who has been very good to Spencer; yet, I'll warrant, Spencer don't know it."

Jeanie's vivid face beneath her visored cap grew suddenly strange. She made no answer.

"Well," said Stephen Pelham, "you were in a hurry when I met you. Now that I've had what I wanted of you, I'll not keep you." Jeanie jumped up, remembering all those many matters she must see to. "Shake hands?" questioned old Stephen Pelham, and Jeanie's mittened fist was swallowed in a horny paw that demonstrated that if, as Jeanie had once said, Spencer Briggs did not know how to shake hands, his grandfather did.

But when Jeanie was once again flying along the street with her boy's swing, she said to herself, "But what was it he wanted with me?" Then there grew upon her face a smile that was not a boy's smile at all, but a woman's, as she whispered, "I guess he just wanted to talk, like any other boy."

It was seven-thirty-five, and Alan Campbell stood in his sitting-room, waiting. He was studying the pattern in the rug. Things

had happened on that afternoon which made Alan Campbell feel guilty. He turned at a stop, then fell back; his lips were first wide-opened, then they puckered into a long whistle. Alan Campbell forgot every thought in one, that one which comes to every father only once, at sight of a daughter's first long skirt. But it was not only the skirt.

"Jeanie, what have you got on?"

"Oh, clothes! Clothes that I thought would do for to-night. But, O father, where is Spencer? I've set everybody to find him ever since four o'clock. He is n't in the schoolhouse. He is n't in the street. He has n't been to supper. He is n't *anywhere!* O father, where is he?"

"I don't know."

"If he is n't there to-night, what shall we do! Father, it's everything, everything gone wrong if he does n't come! The debate will be lost, the Vote of Approval will be lost, for the school will never forgive him, and — and — the Chronicle will be lost next year,"

she looked into her father's face, "for you'll not take him as your assistant, either, I'm afraid?"

"I've never said I'd take him as my assistant."

"But perhaps you would if he got the Vote of Approval."

"I certainly would n't take him without it. Faithful in a few things, ruler over many; that's a business as well as a Bible rule." Thus firmly did Alan Campbell have to speak to bolster his own guilty conscience, as he saw the look on Jeanie's face, a new look, white, set. It made her father start, almost as if Jeanie had known, what she could not have known, of Spencer's visit to the Chronicle office that afternoon; for Jeanie said, very low, —

"Spencer is being tested, to-night!"

They waited seven minutes longer, then a small voice belonging to a tall girl said, "We'd better go without him!"

For one who has known all the cubby-

holes of a ramshackle building in the intimacy of janitorship, it is not difficult to find a place of retirement. The cupola is an impregnable stronghold, even if it is warmed only by January sunshine. If you are overcoated, and if you indulge in frequent stretchings and slappings, you may stay up there unassailed until the last searcher after you has given up the building in despair. It is also possible, on a generous pocketful of oyster crackers, to forego supper, and to write and write until at last you are roused to a vague bewilderment, wondering why in the world you are sitting in the dusky, chilly schoolhouse when you might be in the Campbell sitting-room. Up you get, gather together your papers, and trudge off to said sitting-room, finding it, for some strange reason, blissfully deserted of all actual editors, both of Mentors and Chronicles, so that you are left happily alone with that ideal editor you are some day going to be. You write and write, while, like your own hands,

the clock-hands move on and on. You are writing this:—

“An editor belongs to his paper, and his paper belongs to the public, therefore the editor also belongs to the public, is its servant. He belongs to his community not only professionally but personally. Not only his paper but the man himself should be at the service of every good cause. Whatever his personal ambition, he should be ready always to sacrifice it to public service, for like every other public servant an editor does not belong to himself, but to his town, his State, his country!”

A sound struck across Spencer's fervid words,—the closing of the front door. Spencer glanced up. A woman was standing by the fireplace, one he had never seen before. She was tall and wore a brown suit. The skirt touched the floor. She had on rich black furs, a little-prized Christmas gift from a devoted father. A black hat with a sweeping plume was on her head. The black hat

and furs brought out the ruddy gold of her hair, and showed how clear-cut and radiantly colored was her face. This may be said to be the first time that Spencer Briggs saw Jeanie Campbell! Yet he did not know that it was Jeanie, he did not know until she spoke, although it was not her voice that identified her, for it was a voice Spencer had never heard before, low and taut with arraignment.

“Spencer, where have you been?”

“Here.”

“Why?”

“My monograph. I have a chance —”

“Then it is true,” said Jeanie with quiet finality.

“What?” asked Spencer.

“That you are not true to trust!” came low, staccato sentences. “That you care more for your monograph than you do for the Mentor! That you care more for your ambition than for your duty! That you care more for yourself than for people! All these

things are true of you in spite of all that I have believed!"

Spencer looked at Jeanie as she looked at him. Both seemed to be studying the inside of each other's head.

"Spencer, do you know what has happened to-night?"

"I see some things that have happened to-night," said Spencer quietly, not dropping his eyes from their study of her face.

Jeanie's tone grew icy, like frosty metal. "Do you happen to remember some of the things that were to have happened to-night? Such as a debate? Such as our trying to show this town how much Mr. Dorrel's school needs a new schoolhouse? Do you happen to remember that the school had chosen you, our Editor-in-Chief, to represent us? to help us?"

"I was to make a speech, to lead the debate."

"Why did n't you?"

"I forgot."

"Forgot!" breathed Jeanie, "to-night!"

After a while Spencer asked, very quietly, "What happened, without me?"

"We won!" cried Jeanie, "we won! We had not all forgotten what the school and Mr. Dorrel expected of the Mentor! We won! People went wild and cheered and cheered. You should have seen Mr. Dorrel's face!"

"Who spoke," asked Spencer, "in my place?"

"I did! I am Assistant Editor. It was my place to represent the Mentor, and to help the school."

"It was *my* place," said Spencer calmly, judicially.

"Of course!" said Jeanie, with a sudden bitter little laugh, which must have cleared the air of suppressed thunder, for her face changed, and her voice. "O Spencer, Spencer, why did n't you come? There were so many people there, watching, waiting, listening, my father and your grandfather, and Professor Dorrel and Hiram and all the

school and all the town! If only you could have shown them that you cared, and could speak, for a big town thing, like this! Think of all that has been lost, and all that might have been won!"

"But you did win the debate, — you!"

All the young lady aspect of Jeanie suddenly disappeared in a rage.

"I! Did I want to? Did I want people congratulating me, and shaking my hand? and going on over *me*? Did I want it? And acting as if the Mentor and the speech were *mine*? Why, Spencer Briggs," Jeanie was crimson with fury, "after all I've tried to do with you, did n't I want all that for *you*? Did I want people making all that fuss over me? To think of all you've lost, — the chance to — oh, so many chances!"

Now when Spencer Briggs's spectacles did see a thing, they saw it with amazing clearness! "Yes," said the judicial young voice, "I seem to have lost a good deal to-night."

They were silent, two whole minutes, by the mantel clock.

"But the debate was won," said Spencer, "thanks to you."

"Yes," returned Jeanie, forgetting anger in the bigger cause, "the town is started now! It won't stop! We'll keep up the excitement! The debate's won, and the schoolhouse is won, too! That is, I hope it is!" She suddenly realized she was very tired, and sank into a chair, dropping her furs on the floor, and tugging at unfamiliar hat-pins. Jeanie looked more like her old self now, yet the expression of her face was wholly strange. Familiar as Spencer was with her keen inspection of him, there was something new in Jeanie's cool, aloof eyes.

"Spencer Briggs, I do not understand you. Do you always think only of yourself? Do you never think of the people who expect things of you?"

Spencer was silent; there was a curious flicker back of his glasses.

"I do not understand any one," continued Jeanie, "who has no ideal of public service."

Without replying, Spencer leaned forward a little, and with slow strokes crossed out the paragraph he had been writing when Jeanie entered. Then he lifted his eyes and looked into Jeanie's. An alarm she did not understand tugged at Jeanie's heart, he seemed so far away!

"Spencer, what are you thinking about?"

Spencer smiled a grim little smile. "What you said I always think about, — myself."

Again they sat looking at each other in silence, thinking, both of them, of the months that were past and the months that were to come. The fireplace and the table and the bookshelves seemed unfamiliar as did their own faces. A stirring in the hall made Jeanie start up, for she was in no mood to be under her father's inspection just then.

"Good-night, Spencer," she said.

Tall, remote, grown-up, she seemed to Spencer, and very far away.

"Good-night," he said.

A half-hour later Alan Campbell came to the sitting-room door, unperceived. He saw a boy kneeling before the fireplace, slowly burning sheet after sheet of written foolscap. Still unperceived, Alan Campbell stole away. He had found out something he had wished to know about Herbert Spencer Briggs.

When Alan Campbell departed for New York on Saturday morning he neither carried with him the monograph, nor did he mention it, seeing that it lay in ashes on the fireplace together with certain other hopes of Spencer's. When people like Herbert Spencer Briggs wake up, there is always the danger that they may do it too thoroughly. Spencer Briggs was seeing so much that he appeared more blind than ever, and more deaf, and also dumb. It was a very uncomfortable time for Alan Campbell to have chosen to be absent in New York. Miles of tablecloth seemed to stretch between Spencer and Jeanie. Spencer was looking pretty pale, but

he devoured much food, absently. Notwithstanding dark pencilings beneath his eyes, his spectacles faced Jeanie squarely; there was nothing of the hang-dog about Herbert Spencer Briggs.

It was Jeanie's eyes that drooped a little. They both of them had clear young mouths; it was on Jeanie's that bitterness showed. On Saturday she had abruptly tumbled her hair down again into its tie-back tangle, she had returned to her square-cut shoes and her square-cut shirt-waist and her short skirt, but these things did not make Jeanie the same boy again. Now that Spencer at last saw Jeanie Campbell, it was a different Jeanie that he saw.

Spencer did not linger in the sitting-room on this Saturday. At meals the two spoke in monosyllables of the weather and the food. They stood this silence until Sunday afternoon. Then it seemed better to talk, at any cost. After dinner Spencer marched into the sitting-room and sat down with emphasis

and resolution. He continued the conversation of Friday night as if it had never been broken off.

"From this time on," he said, "I am going to be Editor-in-Chief of the Mapleton Mentor!"

Jeanie had flung herself into a long chair, with one arm tossed above her head in a gesture of weariness unusual with her.

"It is rather late," she answered, "to begin."

"Too late, you think?"

"Too late, for a good many things, since Friday."

"But the debate was won, on Friday."

"But it was not won for you!"

"Why, what difference does that make?"

"All the difference," said the even, caustic voice, "between success and failure, for you, this year."

"What do you mean?"

"The school will never forgive you; therefore, no Vote of Approval. And Mr. Dorrel,

he is never the same to a person who has failed in a trust. Neither is father. Spencer, I believe father would have made you his assistant next year if you could have won the Vote of Approval. It was a hope, a plan I had, for you."

"Your father!" the color flamed to Spencer's cheeks, then died suddenly, leaving them a gray-white. "He has thought of making me his assistant, assistant to a real editor, next year!"

"I think he was thinking about it," said Jeanie honestly; "I was thinking about it anyway."

"I had never dreamed of such a thing!" said Spencer, breathless, burning-eyed.

"Well, I don't believe father is thinking much about it now! not since Friday."

"Yet it was chiefly to win his approval that I was working on Friday so hard at the monograph. I thought he —"

"The monograph was not the way to win father's approval."

"He cares more, you mean," exclaimed Spencer astonished, "he and Professor Dorrel, for success with the Mentor, a school paper, than for —"

"Don't you see why?" said Jeanie wearily; "it is clear enough. Success with the Mentor would mean that you have an ideal of editorial responsibility."

"I have," said Spencer calmly, "an ideal of editorial responsibility."

"You have never shown it," said Jeanie, "to any of us. And now it is too late, since last Friday."

"You really think it is too late?"

"Yes."

"Then clearly," said Herbert Spencer Briggs, "for the five months left, I must be Editor-in-Chief of the Mapleton Mentor."

"O Spencer, Spencer," said Jeanie, tired to the point of irritation, "you can't! You don't know how to run a paper, really. Why, you might spoil everything now. You'd much better continue to —"

"To let you do all the work?"

"Well, but, Spencer," pleaded Jeanie anxiously, "how in the world could we tell what you might do if you actually took the Mentor in charge, now?"

"Yet the school chose me for the position."

"That was in September."

"They would n't choose me now? I never could see why they chose me then. Do you know how it ever happened?"

A queer little smile pulled at Jeanie's mouth. "Yes, perhaps I do!" But in spite of Spencer's expectant look she did not continue.

"Well, whatever they chose me to do, I must do, henceforth!" declared Spencer.

"Of course," Jeanie went on apprehensively, "there's a good deal more you could do, write more editorials, help with the proof, but as to actually running the thing, why —"

"I propose," reiterated Herbert Spencer Briggs, "henceforth to run it."

“O Spencer, what is it you mean to do?”

“My duty,” announced Spencer grimly;
“You showed it to me on Friday night!”

CHAPTER VI

THE AWAKENING

ON Monday morning after a silent breakfast Spencer lingered a little to see if Jeanie were going to walk with him to school, as usual. He even stood awhile, an act unprecedented, to whistle to Jeanie's canary as it swung in the sun-flooded, curtainless dining-room window. But after five minutes off went Spencer, hands in his pockets and head held high. Jeanie did not walk to school with him that morning, nor for many mornings after. To-day she did not want to go to school at all, although she knew she would walk to her desk through a path of glowing congratulations and handshakes. Jeanie felt pretty lonesome, and was glad her father would be back at noon; yet he'd better not do any watching or talking to-day, that father of hers!

It was through no path of congratulation that Spencer Briggs found his seat in the High Room! His head was erect and his eyes steady. He looked at no one, but he saw everybody. He saw each buzzing, excited knot of boys and girls. No one but Spencer himself was seated. He heard the scurry of the girls' feet up and down the aisles as they sped from group to group. He heard the glad hum of excitement all up and down the bare big room, heard everywhere echoed words of the Friday night debate, heard Jeanie's name ringing proudly from every shifting circle, saw eyes constantly turned to the door to watch for Jeanie, saw Raymond Ellis and Hiram Scott thumped on the back and shaken by the hand until they must have been breathless; evidently they, too, as well as Jeanie, had made school and town proud of them. Excitement had got into everybody's arms and legs and voice. Sam Klein, the long, lean school clown, entered the room with a flying leap over the first desk and an

unrestrained whoop. It was the first time the school had met as a body since their Friday triumph. Only one person sat in the long room motionless, most studiously unheeded by all, for, questioned on Saturday as to why he had failed to appear at the debate, Spencer Briggs had replied, steady and unfaltering, "I forgot all about it."

Yet boys and girls who had caught from their teacher the trick of character study could not help noting both on Saturday and now Spencer Briggs's manner. Clearly, he had failed them in a crisis, clearly also he acknowledged the fact, yet there was something about his level-fronting eyes, his strong, set mouth that still compelled expectation or at least curiosity. Boys and girls who seemed so carefully inattentive to Spencer Briggs saw that for once he and Jeanie did not enter the schoolroom together. They surmised the possible absence henceforth of Jeanie Campbell's apron string!

No one, however, looked at Spencer

Briggs, not even Mr. Dorrel, whose face was all alight like those of his pupils, and whose step was almost as light and lively as Sam Klein's as he moved at last to pull the bell-rope. It was the first time in all Spencer's term at Mapleton Academy that Mr. Dorrel had not nodded him good-morning. Not until the last stroke of the last bell did Jeanie Campbell slip into her seat near the door. All turned around to her with eloquent faces, but Jeanie's smile in answer was a very weary one. Just then Spencer Briggs felt a tap on his shoulder from the seat behind, heard a voice in his ear. "Take a tramp with me this afternoon?" whispered Hiram Scott.

"Yes!" for the first time that morning a tremor ran along Spencer's steel-tight lips.

It was a long day until four o'clock. The school was slow in scattering, having so much still to talk over. As in the morning, Spencer made his way through groups that somehow contrived to show him only backs, not faces, but he felt eyes upon him, eyes everywhere.

He little dreamed that if the school had not felt Hiram Scott amply equipped to be their representative, there would have been other boys to volunteer this afternoon for a walk and a talk with the Mentor's Editor.

Yet one person had a smile for Spencer, now at the end of the afternoon, for all day John Dorrel had been studying Spencer Briggs, so that now there was a flashing nod from the schoolmaster's desk as the boy passed. For the first time that day, Spencer's steady eyes dropped.

Side by side the two boys tramped the Mapleton pavement. Mapleton is a town of straggling streets, so that it is a long walk before you get safe out upon the crisp, snowy country roads of the river valley girt by its twin lines of blue Pennsylvania mountains. While on the town streets Spencer still felt eyes upon him, as in school. Hiram spoke to many people, right and left, but Spencer spoke to no one of the passers-by.

As they neared the rickety business block

which contained on its third floor Brown's Hall, Spencer said, —

"A pity that this is the best a town like Mapleton can show in the way of public buildings."

"Yes," agreed Hiram.

As they passed the Chronicle office, Spencer's face grew set and strange. He was thinking of the possibilities for power and service that somehow lay within the clatter of those inky presses. Too late, Jeanie had said! Spencer's thoughts were jerked out to Hiram in sharp, staccato impulse, —

"One thing Mapleton has to be proud of, its paper and its editor, the Chronicle and Mr. Campbell!"

"Spencer, you sound quite like a citizen."

"I hope so," said Spencer in surprise; "I feel that I am a Mapleton citizen."

"Pretty good old place, Mapleton," Hiram went on; "I'm glad I was born here."

"I'm glad I came here," said Spencer.

Hiram turned quickly, "Why?"

"Because of the school."

"You care, then, for the school!"

"I care for the school and for Mr. Dorrel and for the town."

"Then, why — "

"I forgot, on Friday. That is all. I forgot. I shan't forget again. I see, now."

"See what?"

"Myself, past, present, and future."

"Whew!" said Hiram; "that's a good deal to see, for one day!"

"I see more than that," said Spencer grimly, "to-day."

"I say," Hiram hesitated, "I would n't see it all to-day. Leave a little over for to-morrow."

"No. I want to see. I've made up my mind."

"To do what?"

"I don't know altogether yet, but to do it, that's all. The first thing is to be Editor of the Mentor. I have n't been so far, except in name. I was chosen to be a public servant,

and I have n't been. Henceforth I shall be. Henceforth I shall edit my own paper; no one else shall edit it for me."

"You *are* seeing," commented Hiram, "a good deal!" Then a glance at Spencer's bright, far-away spectacles made him anxious. "But, I say, Spencer, don't do it all at once. Go a little slow, while you're learning. Let Jeanie help you."

"She won't want to, now."

"Jeanie!"

"She's different now."

"Oh, come, you never can tell about girls."

"Girls? Are they so different from boys?"

"Usually."

"That's a matter I've never considered," reflected Spencer Briggs. "No, I think J—Miss Campbell, feels exactly as I should feel in her place. She does n't think I amount to much since I failed her on Friday. My grandfather does n't think I amount to much either, and I've lost my chance of showing him, for I burned it. Mr. Campbell won't

think I amount to anything, nor Mr. Dorrel, Jeanie says. I don't think I do, myself."

"I must say," remarked Hiram, "that you're very cool about it."

"Certainly," responded Spencer Briggs; "it's all true, but why should n't I be cool about it?"

Hiram regarded Spencer keenly, slowly. "I wonder what you will do with yourself, Spencer Briggs, now that you don't think you amount to much."

"I shall just go ahead."

Hiram fell thoughtful, then quite low he said, "It is your way to the top, perhaps."

But introspection is an uneasy business for two tall boys like these. They flung it off for other matters, but their thoughts were far apart. They had reached the country now, and were trudging the crisp snow that glinted with the tracks of sleighs.

"Hiram," asked Spencer abruptly, "did you ever have a friend?"

"Well, yes," Hiram laughed, "I should

think so. It's not a very unusual thing to have a friend."

"It's a very unusual thing for me."

"Well, don't you like it?"

"I find that I did like it, yes."

"Is it over then, the friend?"

"Yes, and I never even knew that I had a friend until I lost her, last Friday."

"I was afraid of that," muttered Hiram; then after a moment turned to look with irrepressible curiosity at the tense face beside him. "If you've lost her, Spencer, what are you going to do about it?"

"I shall just go ahead," said Spencer.

Since this was a subject requiring much reflection, the wise Hiram changed it suddenly to another, as he looked down toward Mapleton. "Do you know what I can see when I look over there? Instead of that dirty yellow tumbling-down building with its cupola askew, I can see the finest school-house that ever happened to Luzerne County, growing grander and bigger all the

time I'm looking. I've seen it ever since Friday night."

"I can see it, too," said Spencer.

Then the two turned about, to a brisk walk and a brisker talk, which glowed for both of them with patriotism, for school and town and country, for patriotism was something everybody learned at Mapleton Academy. When at last they turned back by snowy, dusky fields and on into Mapleton beneath the flickering street lamps, and stood at last before the school door, where the old building reared itself in the darkness, all unlighted, Hiram said, "By the way, Spencer, perhaps you've got another friend, without your knowing."

Spencer looked blank a moment, puzzled, then across his face, far too tense in thought to-day, there flashed his radiant, unexpected smile. "I see," he said, and then, "Good-night," as he turned in to his lodging in the school office.

Alan Campbell was a wise father; he knew

when to watch young people, and when to take up his cap of an evening and stroll back to his editorial office. Seeing Spencer Briggs leave the house immediately after supper, and seeing Hiram Scott enter it some half-hour later, Alan Campbell rose, turned up Jeanie's tired face to his with a large, ink-stained hand, unexpectedly kissed her, and left the boy and girl together.

"Jeanie," asked Hiram, "did you see Mr. Dorrel? He looked as if he wanted to see you."

"I know he did, but I ran away. I did n't want to see him to-day. It's the first time he's given me a chance in weeks. You know how he always manages to be busy or interrupted or something when he does n't want to see you. But to-day, yes," admitted Jeanie, "I think he did want to see me, but I ran away."

"If Mr. Dorrel wants a talk with you, he'll have it, and you know it."

"Of course, but not to-day."

"Why are you afraid to have a talk with Mr. Dorrel, J.?"

"I don't know," hesitated Jeanie. "I don't feel like it, yet, that's all."

"You'll have to have it, sooner or later," declared Hiram. "I'm sure he has something he wants to say. And by the way, J., so have I."

"What?"

"I had a walk with Spencer this afternoon."

"So I observed."

"Spencer's all right."

"Is he?"

"J., Spencer thinks as much of the school and the Prof and the Mentor as we do."

"He has taken a strange way to show it."

"He's got to have a second chance to show the school that he cares, too!"

"How? It's too late."

"It won't be too late when I tell the school a thing or two I've found out this afternoon. I've a scheme, J.; I thought of it after our walk. I've a plan for Spencer Briggs!"

"It seems to me that a good many people have plans for Spencer Briggs, but they might as well save themselves the trouble!" Then a recollection brought a doubtful little smile to Jeanie's lips and a caustic quotation to her tongue. "See here, Hiram, I would n't try to run the earth if I were you."

"Running the earth is n't so much in my line as yours, that's true, J. All the same, I've a scheme for Spencer Briggs."

"What?"

"It's called the Mentor Alliance."

"But what is it?"

"You may wait to know, Miss Campbell," Hiram smiled, "but it's a scheme for giving Spencer Briggs a second chance with the school."

"It's too late."

"It's not too late for that, nor for something else."

"What?" Jeanie's eyes were strange with weariness.

"Have you stopped being his friend, J.?"

Jeanie made no answer.

"Because if you have, you'd better not. This is the first time Spencer Briggs has known that he needed a friend. Spencer is waking up. That was what you wanted, in the first place, was n't it, to wake him up? Or did you merely want an editor for the Mentor?"

"Oh, the Mentor!" cried Jeanie in worry. "Dear knows what will happen to it now that Spencer says he's going to run it all himself!"

"I'm not thinking of the Mentor, but of Spencer just at present," said Hiram; "why should you stop being his friend just when he needs you?"

Jeanie's voice was firm, and her lips were set, as she answered, "He has disappointed me!"

Jeanie could not have explained the vague uneasiness that made her for several days disregard the compelling invitation to an interview which she read in the schoolmas-

ter's eyes, so deep both with keenness and kindness. She could not have explained her reluctance more readily than she could have explained John Dorrel's own earlier reluctance to talking things over with her at any time since Spencer Briggs's election to office. Yet Jeanie was experienced enough in the ways of Mapleton Academy to guess the reason for this last. In September she had undertaken to combine the management of Herbert Spencer Briggs and of the Mentor. That had been her own plan, not Mr. Dorrel's; it was possible he had thereafter left her to work out her own salvation. Well, she was sorry enough now!

"Mr. Dorrel, I'm tired of running the earth! It's no fun to be a public-spirited citizen!"

They were sitting in the school office on this early February afternoon as they had sat there nearly five months before. To Jeanie, whose dreams of a new schoolhouse had been growing all winter more bright and

tangible, the school office now seemed a barren enough place, low and dusty and shabby and dark, — to be their Mr. Dorrel's own particular room, where so many boys and girls on so many afternoons had talked their young heads off while their schoolmaster listened, — his vivid brown face alert, his slim brown hands lightly playing with a penholder, — as now.

"You have given me no chance to congratulate you, Jeanie!"

"What for, Mr. Dorrel?" Jeanie's face did not brighten to John Dorrel's smile.

"On the success you made last Friday night."

"But I don't call last Friday a success, Mr. Dorrel. I call it a failure, the biggest I ever had!"

John Dorrel's mobile face turned grave. "And failures come high," he said.

"Yes," sighed Jeanie, "they seem to cost a good deal!"

A smile flashed hopefulness at her. "Never

too much, Jeanie, if we take them right. A failure may be a liberal education."

A rueful smile pulled at Jeanie's set lips. "I guess I don't feel much that way about mine! Besides, it's Spencer's failure, really, that I'm thinking about."

"Best thing that ever happened to him, or I miss my guess!" exclaimed John Dorrel.

"Why, Mr. Dorrel! How could it be a good thing, a failure to trust?"

"Spencer is awake at last, Jeanie."

"I can't get at Spencer at all this week, Mr. Dorrel."

"He's awake! He failed in history on Wednesday, and made two false quantities in scansion to-day. Therefore he's awake, I repeat!"

"Perhaps," acquiesced Jeanie wearily; "but that's only the beginning of troubles, for I can't tell what he's going to do now that he's awake!"

"Can't you trust him, perhaps, Jeanie, to

take care of himself? Perhaps it's time people did."

"Could you, Mr. Dorrel? And how about the Mentor? He says he's going to run it himself now, whatever that may mean! And how about the school? They're down on him now! And how about next year, and Spencer's future, now that he's waking up! O Mr. Dorrel, I've cared a lot about that boy, and I've worked and worked over him and for him all this winter! And all I got for it is — last Friday! He forgot the town debate! And because of his own monograph! Mr. Dorrel, it's so — so disappointing!"

"Yes," responded John Dorrel, "I know how it feels, Jeanie, this working and working over people!"

"With nothing to show for it!"

The schoolmaster pursed thoughtful, brown-bearded lips, then flashed a twinkle around at Jeanie.

"Is that what we do it for?" he asked.

The question made you think, made you

silent after thinking, made you uneasy after that, then quickly made you defensive and earnest.

“Mr. Dorrel, what I mind most is that Spencer does n’t understand. He does n’t understand Mapleton Academy, after being here a year and five months! He does n’t understand how you care and how we care and how we want to show it all, in the new school. If he had understood all that it means to be Editor-in-Chief—for the school, for you—and all it meant to speak for the new building, before all the town—if he had understood all the—the ideal—how could he have forgotten, last Friday? How could he?”

“To understand,” reëchoed the schoolmaster, quite low, “all the ideal,—that’s a good deal, Jeanie, to expect of a boy.”

“The rest of us understand. Did n’t you see that we do, on Friday night?”

“See that you understand,” mused the schoolmaster, “all the ideal?” His eyes grew dreamy, then his tone changed to heartiness.

"I saw enough to make me pretty proud of you. I saw that when boys and girls want a thing as you want the new school, you ought to have it!"

"You do see, Mr. Dorrel," explained Jeanie, feeling for words, "that we feel as if the new school building would be — why — it would be having an outside, a form, bricks and boards and things, a shape, for the way we feel about what you've done for us all, and for the town!"

"And it needs an outside, a form? I see! Well, Jeanie," his fluent brown hand swept a gesture that indicated all the ramshackle building around them, "we need a new schoolhouse and I hope we'll get it!"

"I should think the town would want it, too!" cried Jeanie, reverting to the heat of the Friday's argument. "Half of them have gone here to school! I think they're selfish to want their old town hall first, selfish, not public-spirited at all! Public spirit, that's what Mapleton Academy stands for!"

"I hope so," murmured the Mapleton schoolmaster.

"And public spirit," answered Jeanie, reverting in renewed dejection to the chief subject of her thoughts, "is exactly what Spencer Briggs can't understand."

"Give him another chance, Jeanie."

"He had all his chances last Friday, and he lost them! Why, he might have distinguished himself, before everybody! And I've worked over him all this winter, and — and — everybody knows I have, too! And then, when the time came to show them all that I was right about him, — he was n't even there!"

The schoolmaster made no answer, only looked at Jeanie with his deep eyes of insight. At last Jeanie knew why she had avoided him that week. She did not know why shame came, or from what fault, but shame was there, making her cheeks hot, making her eyes droop.

"When we work and work over people, is

that what we do it for, Jeanie, to show them off to the public? Do we work and work over people, Jeanie, for that reward, a reward to our pride?"

John Dorrel's deep gaze was upon her: boy or woman now, this Jeanie?

Hot, hesitant, self-defensive and self-doubtful both, Jeanie exclaimed, "But, Mr. Dorrel, Spencer did do a wrong thing! He failed in a trust! I can't respect him. You've got to respect your friends, first of all. And Spencer failed me."

"And for that reason will you fail him?"

"Mr. Dorrel, Spencer has disappointed me!"

"And for that reason, will you disappoint — me?"

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW MENTOR

It was a March evening much like a certain November evening four months before. Now, as on that other evening, the wind was merry outside, and the fire was merry inside, the Campbell sitting-room. As on that other evening, Alan Campbell sat in the fitful fire-glow, keen-eyed and silent. He had had no reason yet to be bored with the little play going on before him this winter! For the boy's sake, or the girl's sake, so he had questioned himself once, had John Dorrel sent Spencer Briggs to their household? Queer that of late Jeanie's father had found the boy, who was a stranger to him, far easier to understand than the girl, who was his own daughter!

As on that other evening the sitting-room table was piled high at one end with Mentor

matters, papers much more difficult to sort and organize than had ever been any one's monograph. Before these fluttering papers, yards of galley proof on the one hand, stacked piles of manuscript on the other, sat, as once before, an overworked editor, while at the other end of the table, totally absorbed in private study, sat another young person. The difference between that evening in November and this evening in March was that Spencer Briggs now sat at the Mentor end of the table and Jeanie Campbell at the other.

Things had come to pass in these last weeks. Spencer Briggs had failed in history, and barely passed his Latin. Such a thing had never occurred before. Moreover, there had been no March issue of the Mapleton Mentor. Such a lapse had never happened in the history of Mapleton Academy. Not by such means does an editor win the Vote of Approval! How did these events come about? Try being your own Editor-in-Chief of your own Mentor and find out!

The more Spencer Briggs investigated the responsibilities of editorship, the more enormous they became. His sole equipment for practical detail was determination. Could editing be harder than farming? he asked himself. He found that it could; he found that the intricacies of a mowing-machine were as nothing compared with the intricacies of reporting the school news. He was dimly aware that there were people who wrote the "Rhymes by our Reporters," but he did n't know who these people were, and he would n't ask, so he wrote the rhymes column himself. It took determination to go boldly forth among his fellow pupils to find out what was happening among them. It took still more to incorporate this news in rhyme. Spencer Briggs thrust his Latin scansion aside and studied the jingles of the previous Mentor issues. And his "Rhymes by our Reporters" were good, very good.

Spencer knew vaguely that competitors for the serial chapters of "What Happened at

Slattery's" deposited their manuscripts in a secret spot, known only by the editors, but he did n't know where this spot was, and he would n't ask, so he wrote the needed chapter himself. Romance did not come readily to his pen, — Slattery's cost sleep; but in the end Spencer produced a creditable piece of fiction.

It was not so hard to be his own "Visitor from the Past." The weighty style and the keen common sense of the ghost of Samuel Johnson as it tramped heavily about Mapleton Academy came naturally enough to Spencer, but it was a difficult task for Spencer Briggs to be his own "Traveling Kitten," gamboling through Tokio to the delight of primary subscribers. Spencer Briggs did not naturally gambol in words nor yet out of them. Again he fastened upon the antics of that kitten in previous issues the attention that belonged to his history, and studiously produced a sportive bit of travel.

There were two departments of his paper,

however, wherein Spencer sought no inspiration from previous issues of the Mentor! In two separate and prominent columns, he walked entirely on his own feet! — with curious consequences for expectant subscribers, subscribers who were very expectant, indeed, by the time their deferred Mentor appeared. Yet it must be admitted that an Editor-in-Chief could hardly get a Mentor out on time, when he had to write every word of it himself!

Of course, Spencer might have asked Jeanie to help him, or at least have asked her to tell him how to get other people to help him; for Jeanie had known how to set everybody to work for the Mentor, except the Editor-in-Chief! But Spencer did not ask Jeanie, for the more he discovered what a task editorship was, the more he realized what a task Jeanie's must have been, during that period when he had been writing his "Editorial Responsibility"! Such was Spencer's feeling about Jeanie; as for Jeanie's feel-

ing about Spencer? There seemed to be always miles of tablecloth between them in these days, either dining-room table or sitting-room table. They had become politely conversational, so that they almost called each other Miss and Mr.; stopping just short of this, they did n't call each other anything at all. Meanwhile, at home Alan Campbell looked on, and at school other people looked on, and for the first time in his life Spencer Briggs knew that people were looking on, but neither his eyes nor his manner of editorship betrayed that he knew.

Oftener than ever Hiram Scott joined the group in the Campbell sitting-room. He entered quietly now, taking his middle chair of observation between Jeanie and Spencer. As he seated himself, Jeanie could barely control a quick movement of protest, for unobtrusively Hiram had abstracted a proof-sheet from Spencer's weary pile, and was correcting it. It was Jeanie's place, not Hiram's, to help Spencer with the proof-sheets! Yet

obviously Spencer did not desire her help with proof-sheets or anything else.

Now Hiram Scott in the course of the past weeks had become a little impatient with the situation at the Campbell table, this in spite of his own placidity of temper, and in spite of the excessive politeness of the situation itself. He glanced from Spencer's blue-penciled eyes to Spencer's blue-penciled manuscripts.

"Pretty well through with the April number now?" he inquired.

"All through but the proof-correcting."

"When we get through with the April number there'll be time for some other matters, perhaps?" suggested Hiram.

"When we get through with the April issue there'll be the May issue," responded the Editor-in-Chief heavily.

"I was hoping there'd be time for some other issues, not issues of the Mentor, but issues that concern the Mentor. Pretty stiff business, editing a paper, since it means so

much more than editing. I know you're not so much interested in the social side, but —"

"Know I'm not so much interested in what?"

"Well, I mean the personal part, your relations with the school and the town."

"But I am!" cried Spencer. "An editor belongs to his paper, and his paper belongs to the public; therefore an editor belongs to the public, is its servant. He belongs to his community not only professionally but personally. Not only his paper, but the man himself should be at the service of every good cause. Whatever his personal ambition, he should always be ready to sacrifice it to public service; for, like every other public servant, an editor does not belong to himself but to his town, his State, his country."

"Wh-e-e-ew!" murmured Hiram. "That sounds something like!"

"It sounds something like," said Jeanie icily, — "'something like' the monograph!"

The remark drove the glow from Spencer's

cheek, but not from his eyes. His words had been like the monograph, but the difference lay in his question, sharply noted by that other, older editor over there by the fire.

“What is it you want me to do, Hiram?”

An unwonted eagerness showed in Hiram’s eyes and voice as he explained, —

“You know that meeting we had in the Eighth Grade room after school the other day?”

“What meeting?” exclaimed Jeanie.

“Oh, a boys’ meeting!” Hiram did not so much as glance at her, intent on Spencer.

“Was that a meeting?” asked Spencer. “I thought the boys just happened in there before going home.”

“It was a meeting slightly prearranged, too! By me!”

“I enjoyed the discussion greatly. It set me thinking,” reflected Spencer.

“And set us thinking! Result, a desire for more meetings and more discussion and more

thinking and also more working; in short, the Mentor Alliance."

"The Mentor Alliance, what's that?" asked the Mentor's Editor.

Jeanie was keenly alert; she remembered well what Hiram had answered, when she had asked the same question.

"A chance to support the Mentor campaign for the new schoolhouse, every one of us, for all we're worth! To meet for mutual suggestions and reports every so often, with our Editor-in-Chief to preside and suggest and report, himself, to keep us all going! And we ourselves to keep all the town going, to keep the excitement hot in every store and every home, on the corners, in the post-office, everywhere! Nobody's gone to sleep since Jeanie's speech; but it's the Mentor's job in print and in person to keep up the campaign. 'Down with the town hall, up with the schoolhouse!' as Jeanie said that night."

"I know I said it that night," commented

Jeanie dryly, "but yet you can't 'down with' a thing that is n't up, like the town hall."

"Howard Stephenson and a few more have been hotter for the town hall than ever since the debate, but the majority of the town are for us, or can be made to be, if the Mentor Alliance gets to work, with a leader."

"With me as leader?" asked Spencer.

"It's your chance, Spencer!" Hiram's tone was deep with meaning, and his face, as Spencer looked into it, seemed in its tense scrutiny to be for a moment that composite face of all the school looking up at Spencer when he had addressed them. Then, too, Spencer had come to know Hiram Scott pretty well in these last weeks.

"O Spencer, yes," cried Jeanie, "it's your second chance!"

It was so long since Jeanie had looked at Spencer like that! A sudden torturing twist ran along the boy's mouth as he glanced clearly into her burning eyes, then his lips showed again their firm, thin line. Spencer

looked from Jeanie's face to Hiram's, which seemed so strangely now to be both the face of all the school and the face of his friend.

"My chance?" he asked, very low.

"Your chance to show the school you are one of us!" said Hiram.

"Your chance," Jeanie was breathless, "to show that you can be a public servant, such as — oh, such as Mr. Dorrel wants us all to be!"

Another quick contraction of Spencer's lips. "By doing what?"

"By helping us all to build the new school-house! By doing for people who expect things of you the things that they expect, — that is serving the public, is n't it?"

Spencer's eyes were very bright and his voice very far away. "I am not sure," he said, "not always sure that is true." He was looking straight into the fire now, and his turning thus necessitated Alan Campbell's looking straight at him. "Sometimes I think," said Spencer, "that the only way to be true to

public service is to be true to private convictions!"

There were times when Spencer Briggs, who was six months older than Jeanie and six months younger than Hiram, seemed to them both to be speaking from a distance of far years ahead of them, and this was vaguely disturbing to two young people who were vigorously engaged in bringing him up! There ensued a long silence in the Campbell sitting-room.

At last Jeanie said, "That's true, Spencer. I think I see. But I don't see that it has anything to do with this present question."

Spencer's hand toyed a moment with the sheets of his editorial, which, to his mind, had a good deal to do with the present question; but he made no answer.

"The Mentor Alliance," said Hiram, "will meet a week from to-night, if that will suit you, Spencer, for the April number will be safely out and over by then. And we'll meet

here, if we may, Jeanie. You'll be on hand, Spencer?"

"Surely, Hiram."

When Hiram went away, Jeanie stepped out on the porch after him into the windy, starry March evening.

He turned on her sternly. "How long do you intend to keep this thing up, J.?"

"What thing?"

"Your letting Spencer alone, your not helping with the Mentor. You have n't had a thing to do with him, really, for six weeks, and all because when you tried to run him he did n't run to suit you. You thought you could pack him into a doll-carriage and push him wherever you pleased, but I tell you one thing straight, J. Campbell, Spencer Briggs has n't lost any ground with the school since we've seen that he's jumped out of your doll-carriage, lately! But you, now that Spencer's tramping along on his own feet, you desert him!"

"Desert?" asked Jeanie. "I?" But her

tone was calm, she looked up at the stars; then her eyes came back to Hiram, and he saw that she was smiling at him, an aloof, amused smile that made her look curiously older.

"Hiram, I never saw you so warmed up over anything before!"

"Of course, I'm warmed up over this campaign!"

"Which campaign, the pushing of Spencer Briggs, or the pushing of the new school-house?"

"Both!"

"Hiram," said Jeanie, "look out! Who's running Spencer Briggs now, I'd like to know. Before you throw any stones at me for deserting, you wait till he does n't run to suit *you*!"

"He will run to suit me; he's all right!" said Hiram defensively.

"Spencer Briggs has been too much for me, and he may be too much for you, Hiram, you and your Mentor Alliance!"

Back, presently, into the sitting-room and the seat across from the Mentor manuscripts and the Mentor Editor. For six long weeks it had been hard enough to sit thus, with your hands and your head and your heart itchingly eager to be of assistance at the other end of the table; but if the boy sitting in Spencer's chair did n't think your help worth asking for, then surely the boy sitting in Jeanie's chair was not one to offer it! Meanwhile what was happening to that Mentor you had worked over? It had n't even appeared in March, and if it did appear, as now at last seemed hopefully imminent, in April, what would be its contents and what would people say to them? And also, what was happening to that boy you had worked over, whose set, shut lips offered Jeanie no more clue to what was going on within than she knew about that editorial near his hand? But, oh dear, dear, how tired and lonesome he looked! How slowly his painstaking fingers traveled down the proof-sheets that Jeanie knew how

to turn off so rapidly! Hiram Scott had dared to call her a deserter! Also Hiram Scott had dared to help Spencer with the proof. Why should not Jeanie dare, grim as he looked, that silent young dragon over there?

Very hard they tried to keep their eyes on their respective pages of print, that elusive kitten beneath Spencer's hand, those elusive geometric symbols under Jeanie's; then suddenly up popped two pairs of eyes, deep and clear, and met long and squarely.

A little pleading smile trembled to Jeanie's lips, her eager hand was outstretched. "Pass me that pile of proof, Spencer!"

Spencer did not smile, he merely kept looking at her. "Can you want to?" he asked.

"Want to! I thought you did n't want me to, that was all. I did n't think you thought you needed my help."

Now Spencer did smile, a queer, grim little smile. "And I did n't think I deserved your help, any more!"

"O-o-o-oh!" Jeanie breathed a long sigh of

comprehension; then suddenly her face flushed crimson and dimpled with joy. "Was that all?" she said. Then because flooding relief and understanding were making her clear lips feel a little unsteady, she repeated cheerily, "Pass over the proof, then!"

"No!" said Spencer, and once more his face was locked up in impenetrable resolution.

"Why not?"

"You won't like it, what I've written here, and I can't help it."

"Why shan't I like it?"

"It's a change of policy. It's not what you think, any more; it's what I think." Spencer spoke from a depth of weariness. "And I have to say what I think, I can't help it. It's an editor's duty. But it's hard on you."

"It's hard on the Mentor and on the school, too, perhaps," murmured Jeanie, while anxiety clouded her brow.

"Yes," agreed Spencer, "I suppose it is; I've fallen into 'the dangers and difficulties

if an editor does not supervise and direct every department of his paper himself'!"

"Spencer, please tell me, exactly what do you mean?"

"This, for one thing. Read it, before you help with the proof." A long fluttering galley sheet went flying over to Jeanie's hand.

She bowed intent eyes over it, reading rapidly. Spencer watched. When she reached the end, she did not look up. She kept her eyes on the sheet, and raising her hollowed left fist to her lips whistled softly.

"What are you thinking?" cried Spencer.

Jeanie leaned back. "I'm thinking what will the other people think." Then an irrepressible, fleeting smile. "I'm wondering what 'Old Foggy' himself will think."

"I can't help that," said Spencer, "those are my convictions."

"Spencer, is it possible that they've been your convictions all along?"

"They must have been in my head, I suppose."

"And so now they've got to be in the Mentor, too, I suppose?"

"An editor must say what he thinks."

"I wonder," mused Jeanie thoughtfully, "if he must, always." And then suddenly her face and her tone changed sharply. "Do you really believe all this; would you yourself, for instance, act on your own arguments here, an ambitious boy like you?"

"I've thought a good deal," said Spencer, "about ambition, since that night, since my monograph, in January."

Jeanie gave him a long, dismayed scrutiny. "Spencer Briggs, I really believe you'd go back to a farm, after all your opportunities!"

"I might go back," said Spencer, "but I should n't want to."

"Who could want you to!" exclaimed Jeanie; but at her own words a sharp, suspicious recollection swept her face scarlet, and after all these aloof weeks, shook her with the realization how much she had hoped for Spencer Briggs's future, too much to

let any one interfere with it, not even himself.

"Are you still willing to help me," asked Spencer, "after reading that?"

Jeanie did not answer, for a moment, nor look up, although she felt Spencer's gaze upon her. Presently she met it, — such a tense gaze and so tired! Again Jeanie smiled. "I don't see that this," Jeanie tapped the paper, "makes any difference about my helping you."

Out shot a yard of fresh proof across the table. "If that does n't make any difference, does this make a difference? This is worse."

Jeanie read, more slowly than before, for there was more to think about. There was more for Spencer to think about, too, as he watched her!

"It's what I really think, you see," he said, "about an editor's duty to himself and to his subscribers, and to public causes."

Jeanie did not reply, merely read on.

Spencer kept silent as long as he could,

then exclaimed, "You don't like it, do you? You don't understand?"

Up came Jeanie's head. "Not understand, this!"

Upon Spencer's wondering, wistful face her eyes shone, radiant!

"You like it!" he gasped.

"Like it! Like it! How could I help it! Why, Spencer, even I did n't know you had it in you, an editorial like this!"

"I never dreamed you'd like it, you or anybody else!"

"Or anybody else!" cried Jeanie, "it will be everybody else! Wait till the Mentor Alliance, wait till all the school, all the town reads this. O Spencer, this is, this is, public spirit!"

"Yes!" said Spencer quietly, "I meant it to be. But I did n't think you'd like it."

Jeanie's face was all softly aflame. She brought her hands together in one glad clasp.

"O Spencer, Spencer, in spite of every-

thing that's happened, in spite of everything, this will win you the Vote of Approval!"

"And that is what you want, is n't it, Jeanie?"

"Don't you, Spencer?"

"Yes, more than I did, more than I ever supposed I could, now that I know the school better, now that I realize all that it means."

"This will win it, Spencer, this and your being leader of the Mentor Alliance. Oh, how glad and proud I shall be! Oh, I'm too happy to keep still! I must do something! Quick, Spencer, hand over that pile of proof."

Still Spencer's face showed no reflection of Jeanie's radiance. "Suppose," he said slowly, "that the Mentor Alliance did n't take that editorial" — he hesitated — "did n't take it the way you do, would you still be willing" — he paused — "would you still be willing to help me with this proof, and with the Mentor, just the same?"

"Why, Spencer, I don't understand what you mean."

"I mean that I shall always have to say what I think, no matter what other people think, or you think. That is n't always doing for people that expect things of you the things that they expect — public service, you called that."

Impatient a little with this strange, anxious scrutiny of Spencer's, Jeanie cried, "But, Spencer, what is all this worry about? This editorial is splendid. In this, you're doing more, much more than any of us expected of you."

"Suppose," persisted Spencer, "that other people don't like it, as you do, would you still be willing to help me with the Mentor?"

There was a silence. At last Spencer's low voice broke it. "You want the Vote of Approval. And I know that you do."

"Yes," whispered Jeanie, "I do."

"Suppose I did n't even try to win it, would you still — help me?"

Slowly the brightness faded from Jeanie's

face before the strange, solemn searching in Spencer's eyes. You could not answer such eyes with anything but honesty, so Jeanie sat thinking of herself, and the Mentor, and Spencer.

"Suppose I even did something that would prevent my winning the Vote of Approval, ever, would you still — help me?"

"But how? Why?" cried puzzled Jeanie.

"But suppose I *did*!"

There rang through Jeanie's head another voice. It had been ringing for six weeks! "When we work and work over people, is that what we do it for, Jeanie? to show them off to the public? Do we work and work over people, Jeanie, for that reward, a reward to our pride?"

Very straight and high was Spencer's head as Jeanie looked at him, as he looked at her, and Alan Campbell over there by the fire was quite forgotten. Silence, and clear, level young eyes that met.

"O Spencer, you have the loneliest face

I ever saw! I'll help you, yes, whenever you'll let me! Now give me that proof!"

There by the fire the tension of the weeks of a father's watching slackened, and a prayer of thankfulness went speeding past the stars, for his little girl had come back to her own!

And the boy? For a sharp second Spencer shut his eyes, then they flashed wide, and his wonderful smile flashed, too. He looked as if he actually wanted to shake hands; then he said, full and clear, in Alan Campbell's hearing, by the fire, "Thank you!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE MENTOR ALLIANCE

A HALF-HOUR before, they had come tramping and clattering into the Campbell sitting-room. It was the kind of room people take possession of without question. With like ease the members of the Mentor Alliance accepted the presence of Alan Campbell and his daughter, as being without a voting voice in discussion, but still as being two good fellows along with the rest, to be referred to at need. The April number of the Mapleton Mentor had appeared that morning. A copy had been flung upon the table; in front of it, at the table, sat the Editor-in-Chief. Irregularly ringed about him sat the Mentor Alliance, indulging from time to time in sundry kickings and lurchings, clutchings of each other's collars, tweakings of each other's hair, and squealings, even such manifestations as all human boys exhibit when

they need relief from too exuberant earnestness; for the Mentor Alliance was earnest enough, to-night!

If you are an Editor-in-Chief, and copies of your Mentor have been laid some morning on every desk in the High Room, by evening you are certainly beginning to wonder what people are thinking about it, and about you. And you are not the only person who is wondering about these two questions. Jeanie Campbell and Hiram Scott are wondering, too. There are eight pairs of keen young eyes bent on Spencer Briggs to-night, for these are young people unconsciously trained to sharpest character study in the school of that past-master in this art, their teacher, John Dorrel.

Out from the encircling group darts a slim and graceful hand, picks up the Mentor from the table, and finds the editorial pages. Raymond Ellis has a flashing, handsome face, a daring wit, and a daring tongue.

"I say, Spencer, you've given us a neat

little turn-about on page 3. Our little Mentor does n't do any side-stepping or shuffling, merely faces right about. But what if such a sudden turn should make subscribers a little dizzy?"

"I have to write what I think," said Spencer.

"But it's a little awkward to think it now, after thinking something else in five previous numbers. Besides, it was a great idea, for booming the Mentor, the fighting 'Old Fogy'; a great idea of somebody's."

"It was n't my idea," said Spencer.

"Guess we're having your ideas straight enough in this issue, are n't we, Spencer?" asked Sam Klein.

"Yes, I thought I owed you that."

"I'm wondering," murmured Raymond, "what Old Fogy'll say in the next Chronicle, after reading this. What will the old fellow find to hit, when he does n't find anything to hit?"

But Spencer's face remained tensely grave.

"Come, gentlemen, gentlemen," suggested Hiram Scott, "let's get a little nearer to business."

"Oh, I'm attending to business all right," replied Raymond airily; "attending to something that interests me."

"I should think we'd better all attend to the business of Mr. Dorrel's schoolhouse," said little Patrick Murphy's falsetto pipe.

"And Spencer's editorial is enough to fire us all up to that!" Hiram plunged in, looking sharply around at them.

"Yes!" said Raymond, with just a hint of rising inflection; "shall I read some parts from page 1, 'An Editor as a Public Servant'?"

"An editor's duty is not to go with popular opinion, but to educate popular opinion."

"And is n't that," cried Jeanie, "what the Mentor Alliance is for, exactly, to educate popular opinion in this town to the need of a new schoolhouse!"

She glowed at Spencer, yet wondered why

his face and Raymond's, too, showed so little response.

"The chief duty of any public servant is to be true to his public, but the best way to that is first to be true to himself. What an editor owes his public is first of all his own convictions. He should prove to himself that he's found the right road, and then ask other people to go with him."

"Coming right down to business, Briggs," asked Raymond abruptly, "what road do you mean, as concerns you and the Mentor Alliance?"

But several hot defensive faces turned on Raymond. "How much plainer do you want any one to be?" demanded Hiram and Jeanie, and Patrick, too.

"The Mentor editorials have been plainer than that heretofore," answered Raymond; "I'm merely trying to get at this one. No harm in being a little more explicit, Briggs, if you're going to lead us on to victory."

"I see that I ought to have been more explicit," admitted Spencer.

"We all know where you stand on the new school question, Spencer," cried Hiram, with a dark look at Raymond. "You don't need to be more explicit than that next paragraph. Read that, Raymond."

"There is no chance like an editor's to teach enthusiasm, there is no greater responsibility than imparting one's own ideals to other people. Often other people don't want them; nevertheless it's right for an editor to keep right on, true always to every cause he thinks is right. And what a chance every paper has to support public causes! Every paper and every editor should work first for the good of the community, toward big service to many people, toward the education and uplifting of the town. Every paper and every editor belong to the town, to the public.'"

"There! I should n't think that anybody'd doubt the enthusiasm of the Mentor

for the new schoolhouse, even if Spencer's editorials don't sound exactly like mine!" But at Jeanie's last words there was an uncontrollable ripple of amusement, not heard but felt.

"So you're not in the driver's seat just at present, J., and you admit it?" It was an irrepressible comment from a retiring but observant member of the M. A.

"The driver's seat ought to be mine," said Spencer.

"And we've all climbed in behind and are cheering," cried jovial Sam; "that's one way of saying something you've found grander words for, somewhere on that same page."

"This?" asked Raymond. "'When an editor and his people work, both together, for something high and splendid, there is little they can't accomplish. When an editor stands by his public, and his public stands by him, working earnestly, both together, for the greatest good of the greatest number, there is nothing they may not attempt and attain.'"

"Hurrah!" cried Patrick's shrill falsetto.

"I said," explained Spencer, looking around wonderingly at all those glowing faces, "when his people stand by him; he, they, can accomplish those things then, but not otherwise."

"Well, does n't it look as if we were going to stand by you, H. S. B., Editor-in-Chief of the Mapleton Mentor?" Sam Klein's face was grinning, radiant.

And suddenly Spencer, seeing all that ardent enthusiasm shining upon him now from eight faces, even Raymond's, could no longer face that resolution to which he had been nerving himself for ten minutes past.

"We're getting some points settled, I think," remarked Hiram, looking around, "if any such have been in doubt among any of our members. Therefore, let's move on — to the mass meeting!"

"Move on to a mass meeting!" Spencer and Jeanie gasped out in astonishment, so that the others, secretly familiar with the

notion, roared out merrily, while Hiram explained blandly.

"The mass meeting, our latest scheme. We're giving ourselves a month to work this town up to that. Brown's Hall, May 2d, mass meeting! Grand mass meeting! All the men of all this town, to discuss the new schoolhouse! 'Up with the schoolhouse, down with the town hall.' But they don't have ladies at a mass meeting. Sorry, J."

"Oh, but Spencer will speak! That's your scheme, Hiram! O Hiram, is n't it?"

"It is, lady! It is, gentlemen! It is, Mr. Briggs!"

"May 2d!" It was Spencer's first dismayed thought, while at the same time there shot through the minds of Jeanie and Hiram that something else was to happen in that first week of May! "May 2d! That is the date of the May issue of the Mentor, and it took me two months to get out this one."

"Oh, but I'm going to help with the next, Spencer!" cried Jeanie.

“Could n’t be a better date if the May number gives us as good an editorial as this, — that will set us all going for the evening campaign!”

But for answer Spencer turned on Hiram a very strange face, and his lips paled a little as he said, still postponing that previous resolution, —

“But I shall have to be more explicit in my May editorial; I see that, now.”

“But more explicit is the only thing more that we wanted; was n’t that your only trouble, Raymond?” Hiram turned a quick glance in Raymond’s direction.

“Yes, that was all I wanted,” answered Raymond.

“Then I think you’ll have what you want, next time,” said Spencer.

There was more talking, more planning, until at last, amid cookies, amity, and expectation, the Mentor Alliance broke up its meeting, and with much enthusiastic noise issued forth into the April evening.

Hiram and Spencer lingered a little.

"I hope you don't mind my saying, Spencer," said Hiram, "that I'm a pleased and proud man this day, over you."

It was not a sensation Spencer Briggs had ever expected to meet, — that look in Hiram's eyes, — to meet and then forego!

"Yes," said Spencer, "I'm afraid I do mind your saying that."

"But why in the world!"

"Because I'm going to disappoint you."

"Disappoint, now?"

"Nothing is going to happen as you expect, I am afraid."

"Spencer!" It was a cry from both Jeanie and Hiram against Spencer's strange, resolute, alarming face.

Then slowly Hiram's face took on its set lines that reflected Spencer's sternness. Hiram's even tones were merely a trifle more even than usual. "Things had better happen as I expect, Spencer! You may understand that, if you value friendship!"

"O Spencer," pleaded Jeanie, "don't fail us this next time, please! May 2d, that is the week of the Vote of Approval!"

Quickly, but with deep imprint upon his brow, Spencer looked from Hiram's face to Jeanie's, reading the same meaning in both, looking beyond them, too, to Alan Campbell's, reading in that third face also the same meaning, the need of doing for the people who expect things of you the things that they expect.

"I am afraid," said Spencer Briggs, "that I must have my own vote of approval!" And with that off he went, swinging forth into the night.

"What do you think he's going to do, J.?"

"I think he's going to do whatever he pleases."

"And not what we're expecting, what we have a right to expect? Just when we've got the boys and the school all enthusiastic?"

"Hiram, are you perfectly sure that the

boys did n't see that you and I did all the talking? Spencer did n't."

"Do you mean to suggest that Spencer Briggs may fail us, now? a second time? If he goes back on me, I'll —"

"Desert him?" Jeanie lifted demure eyes; "just because when you try to run him, he does n't run to suit you?"

Now the Mapleton Chronicle appeared on a Saturday, a good day for a county newspaper to appear, a paper that aimed to provoke and promote discussion; for on Saturdays all the country-side drove to town. Muddy, jaded vehicles attached to muddy, jaded horses lined the curb. There was unwonted bustle on the streets and in the stores. But Spencer Briggs was oblivious of all this, because for one thing Spencer Briggs was far-sighted and so always saw his Mapleton of the future much more clearly than his Mapleton of the present; and for another thing, he was so absorbed in reading the

Chronicle that he did n't see anything at all, until *bump!* he had run into some one, and this some one had been as oblivious as Spencer because he himself was reading the Mapleton Mentor. The two printed sheets swished against each other, and then backed away.

"Excuse me," said Spencer, with directness, "but I was so interested in seeing what Old Foggy has to say this week."

"And I hope he's enough for you, in answer to this!"

Spencer started, for looking up, he found himself gazing into his grandfather's eyes.

"You!" exclaimed Spencer.

"Yes, me! And 't is a wonder we don't forget each other's looks, seeing how often we don't meet. Looked for your face once in January, but it did n't appear. Been wondering ever since where you were that night."

"I forgot to go."

"Forgot," mused Stephen Pelham. "Was thinking you'd got over that."

"I have, now."

"The girl made a good speech, but it was you I was after."

"I am going to make a speech on May 2d. There is to be a mass meeting then, about the schoolhouse and the town hall."

"I'll be here. We folks over on Lost Mountain are all for that new schoolhouse. School like that man's deserves a building."

They stood looking at each other. More than once that winter they had run from each other on the street; but now, having squarely collided, they lingered.

"Do you want I should come over to hear your speech?"

Clear, hungry eyes faced clear, hungry eyes.

"No!" answered Spencer.

Stephen Pelham's grizzled lips trembled, twitched. "That's a straight one! You generally do sling 'em straight." He shuffled heavy boots a moment in silence, but was not ready to run away, nor was Spencer.

"By the way, what's made a turn-coat of

you? Why do you back out of all the arguments you've been giving us for five months? Where do you stand finally in this 'Back-to-the-Farm' question?"

"Just where that editorial stands that you're reading. Just where Old Foggy has been standing for five months. Only he does n't seem to be standing where he was, in this letter to-day."

"How can he stand where he was, if there's nothing to stand out for, no clever young whipper-snapper to answer? When the young whipper-snapper turns right around and agrees with him? As I read Old Foggy, getting at him through all the farmer words he puts on, he don't seem to say anything at all, nothing but plain mad. Nothing makes a fighter so mad as not having anything to fight!"

"But if he has convinced me, should n't I say so?"

"It's a funny kind of editing notion, that."

"But those are my convictions, now."

“And whose were they before, then?”

“Jeanie’s.”

Stephen Pelham’s eyes grew a-sparkle with twinkles beneath his heavy brows. He caught hold of himself in time to turn a laugh into a long whistle.

“Then your own convictions are right here under my thumb? ‘We’ve been talking in these arguments of ours a good deal about ambition, as if ambition were the first and best thing for every man to have. You hear of a lawyer having his ambitions, or a doctor, or a merchant, or a statesman having them. You never hear of a farmer having ambition. It seems as if ambition and farming could n’t hold together. Perhaps that’s true. We are inclined to think it is; but, we ask, does that prove something wrong with farming, or something wrong with ambition? When we think of some of the things Old Foggy has been saying to us this winter, we’re inclined to believe the trouble is not with the farming. When we think of some of the farmers we

have known, we are further inclined to believe that some of them are too big for ambition.' So this is what Old Fogy has led you to thinking, is it?"

"Yes."

"Pity if the old fool should interfere with some plans I've been hatching for you! And you've been swallowing all he's been saying?"

"Why, don't you yourself agree with him, grandfather?"

Stephen Pelham shrugged his shoulders. "I, — well, yes, sometimes; but what makes you agree with him?"

"What he says."

"Where and when? for I've made out the old fellow as more than half fool."

"Not here," and Spencer drew a clipping from his pocket, and read, 'There's folks that talk as if for a young fellow to stay by the farm was sticking his head in the mud, as if instead of flying up to the sun in that airship folks call ambition, the young fellow that

stays by the farm was digging a hole for himself in one of his own furrows and crawling in and drawing the earth over his head. But listen, maybe it is n't buryin' he's doing to himself, but plantin'. Furrows ain't graves. Maybe some day that young farmer fellow will find himself stretching, pushing, bursting, growing into the finest young shoot of a man the soil can make of him, for there's just as good secrets to be learned out of the earth as out of the air.' There," said Spencer, "I can't find any arguments to answer that, and I've said so."

"You can't find any arguments to answer that?" Stephen Pelham thundered.

"No."

"Well, what's your brain good for then?" Astonished, mystified, rebuffed, Spencer saw his grandfather's eyes ablaze with anger at him. "You find arguments to answer, you find 'em, or don't expect any peace or patience out of me!" And the old man turned on an angry heel, and strode fiercely away.

Spencer looked after him. "It never does any good for us to try to talk. I think we can each time, but we can't. I wonder if it's ever any use to try to explain anything to anybody."

Still you could hardly be one of John Dorrel's pupils and not some time try to explain yourself to him, yet even to him futilely, as it seemed to Spencer. To tell the truth, in these days Spencer Briggs was not very easy to understand. Why should he, for instance, at the now numerous meetings of the Mentor Alliance, be at times so mum that Jeanie and Hiram were on tenter-hooks, while a caustic wit and insight showed in Raymond's words; and then again would the Editor leader of the M.A. burst forth into such sudden eloquence of local patriotism as made every one of them ashamed to doubt his intense allegiance to their cause! If Spencer could talk like that, he could sway a mass meeting. Listening to him, the Mentor Alliance saw their new schoolhouse already

proudly reared to completion and their Professor Dorrel in it, its proud possessor and its proudest possession. This Spencer Briggs, long alien but now advocate, was going to help them to accomplish, — then what in the world meant those dark, quiet references to the coming May number? When the May number must be the best of all the year! So thought Jeanie, with wistful eyes toward the Vote of Approval. So thought the Mentor Alliance, expectant of a flaming editorial from Spencer on the morning of May 2d, and a flaming speech in the evening. And not only the Mentor Alliance was thus expectant, but, as Spencer discovered, so also was the schoolmaster himself.

Never such a man as John Dorrel for being inaccessible when he wanted to be and accessible when he wanted to be; in other words, this teacher possessed the rare endowment of knowing when to let boys and girls learn things for themselves. Many a time this year had Jeanie Campbell and Spencer Briggs

both yearned for assistance with their problems, only to find that they must work out those problems for themselves. As for Spencer, he did not even have a chance to find out whether his teacher thought his answer the correct one. Then suddenly, after weeks of baffled seeking of an interview, Spencer found himself near the schoolmaster's desk, with brief opportunity for a little conversation amid the hurly-burly of recess.

"Mr. Dorrel, for some time I have been wanting to apologize to you."

"For what, Spencer?"

"For my failure in Latin and history."

"Spencer, does one need to apologize to any one but one's self for failure?"

Spencer's head jerked back in a quick, nervous way he had of receiving a new thought. Spencer deliberated, then answered, "But I do not feel that I owe myself an apology for that failure."

"Why not?"

"Because I can make up that Latin and

history some day, but some other things I'm studying this year, I've got to get hold of now or never."

"I agree with you about that. You refer among other things to your duties of the Mentor Alliance?"

"Yes."

"Spencer," the master's eyes showed their deep glow of friendliness, "don't worry over book failures for the present. So far as I am concerned you can better afford to fail my expectations of you in your history than you can afford to fail the expectations of the Mentor Alliance."

But Spencer's eyes opened wide in harassment. "But if I did fail their expectations, what—what would become of yours?"

The glow in John Dorrel's eyes changed to a look of keener, colder insight. "Spencer, the loyalty of the Mentor Alliance toward the school has pleased me more than anything in years, — are you not also one of us?"

"Then," said Spencer, with a quick intake

of breath, "you think the Mentor Alliance does understand?"

"Understand what?"

"You. Your school. What you teach us. For they don't understand me."

There was a hint of sharpness in the schoolmaster's tone. "Spencer, the less any of us think whether other people understand us or not, the better. It is better for you to try to understand what the school expects of you."

"Mr. Dorrel, do you want me to have the Vote of Approval as much as Jeanie does?"

"Yes." The schoolmaster adjusted a blotter, straightened a book. "Spencer, I want to hear you make, next Monday evening, the speech you did not make last January!"

The deep brown eyes met the gray ones, which were wide with worry. "I do not know, Mr. Dorrel, what is going to happen next Monday."

None too satisfying to either of them, Spencer's long-deferred conversation with

Mr. Dorrel! Jeanie's was better, although it occupied only a few minutes squeezed from office hours on Friday.

"Mr. Dorrel," — Jeanie's tremulous little smile showed, — "I think you are sometimes just a little mean. Two months ago you made me afraid I was disappointing you. Since then you've never given me a chance to find out whether I *have* disappointed you."

"Here, then, is the chance," and the schoolmaster swept out a humorous arm as if he were presenting the chance on a salver.

Jeanie smiled. "But have I, Mr. Dorrel, this year, — have I disappointed you?"

"No, Jeanie, and I do not believe you ever will!"

Jeanie grew all aglow for a moment, then a quick anxiety shadowed the radiance. "And Spencer has n't disappointed you either, has he, Mr. Dorrel?"

"No"; but the tone was not very confident.

"I hope he's never going to disappoint any one again, especially next Monday night."

It was the evening of that same Friday. Jeanie had turned from the bookshelf where Minna was always directed to put all packages received from the printing-office.

"Where is it?" asked Jeanie; "the package of the May Mentor, from the printing-office? Why haven't they sent it? It must be ready."

"I told them to send all copies to the school this time," said Spencer.

"But why, Spencer? How queer! The Mentor always comes here first."

"This lot is all right. I've looked them all over. I'll have them all on the desks good and early on Monday morning."

"I'd like to see a copy, though I believe I've read every word in proof but your editorial."

"I think," said Spencer, "that Monday morning will be time enough for you to read my editorial! It is not like the April one. It is explicit enough this time."

"I'm glad of that! For it needs to be explicit, to fire us all up for the evening."

Spencer said nothing. He was looking pretty pale this week.

On Monday Spencer did a strange thing. He deliberately played truant all day long, all by himself, out in the country. He did this because he thought the strong May wind and the strong May sun were the only comrades who could nerve him for the speech to be made that night. His long tramp circled Mapleton so that he was never out of sight of the schoolhouse. He saw it all the time. Sometimes it was the old schoolhouse where he had learned more than he had ever learned in his life before; sometimes it was the new schoolhouse all his friends were dreaming of.

It never occurred to Spencer that in thus faring forth all day, he was leaving Jeanie to bear the brunt of his May editorial, all alone. Spencer had never felt so alone as he did to-day; but when at five o'clock he walked into the Campbell sitting-room and saw Jeanie, he realized that she, too, had never

felt so alone as on that day. Hiram Scott was standing with Jeanie near the table.

"I have been standing up for him, Hiram, all day long."

"You'd better! Who was it made him Editor of the Mentor?"

"Who was it made him leader of the Mentor Alliance?"

"Well, one good thing, he's gone, so he can't make things worse by a speech to-night."

"I shall make a speech to-night!" Spencer faced them both.

Hiram turned. He looked from the Mentor he held in his hand to the Mentor's Editor before him. His lips parted in one word, "Deserter!"

Spencer braced himself, met that word! His voice was low. "Because of my views about a schoolhouse, you call me — you, Hiram — deserter?"

"It is far more," said Hiram, "than a schoolhouse, to us! But you have proved

that you cannot understand — Mr. Dorrel! You have proved that you are not one of us!”

“Jeanie,” asked Spencer, “do you feel like that about my editorial?”

Jeanie stood straight as a young tree, facing him. “I am sorry,” she said, “for what you’ve written here; I am sorry for what you’re going to say to-night.” Level and fathomless-clear her eyes looked into Spencer’s; “but I do not desert a friend!”

For a moment Spencer felt again the lonely wind and sun, felt again the lonely roads he had tramped all day; then suddenly, looking into Jeanie’s eyes, he was not lonely any more. “I am not afraid any longer,” he said, “to say what I am going to say, to-night!”

CHAPTER IX

THE SPEECH

PERHAPS there are other Mapletons in the world, perhaps there is but one. Certainly not many towns could exhibit a meeting like this one, as orderly as it was intense, crowded to the door of old Brown's Hall, yet very quiet, concentrated each one on the great discussion, from Alan Campbell at the chairman's table to Stephen Pelham, a vigorous old farmer figure, standing out against the wall by the door. About in the centre of the crowded hall sat a group of boys, black-browed, taut with determination, the determination not to let Spencer Briggs speak that night! Sam Klein, Raymond Ellis, Hiram Scott, they sat ready to spring to catch the chairman's eye first, if Spencer Briggs should make any sign of rising. Spencer sat at the end of a row by himself, having no friend to

sit near, — alien that he was, and proved traitor to his cause!

There may be other Mapletons, but is there one where the boys who were to be men and the men who had been boys should meet with so little consciousness of difference of age, being all alike citizens, and citizens at present with a blood-hot difference of view as to what citizens should do for their town?

That this Mapleton and this mass meeting should be just what they were, on this night, was due to a man seated aside, so that he could, as ever, watch people, with deep and friendly eyes. Mapleton was Mapleton because twenty years before a brilliant young student, just back from Germany, had determined to give his life for his town; there are so many ways of giving a life! Of all that crowd to-night, half of them had known John Dorrel as a schoolboy, half of them as schoolboys had known John Dorrel. Yet Mapleton had never so much as given him a proper schoolhouse for his school! The matter had

been mentioned from time to time, like many another public matter, for Mapleton was a comfortable, solid community, slow to action, and complacent over things as they were, especially when it came to a question of spending money on changes. But civic pride had been growing as the town grew, and even the most conservative of townsfolk were beginning to be ashamed of having no proud public buildings to show to surrounding villages beginning to point to their new libraries, new post-offices, new town halls, new schoolhouses. Quiet old Mapleton was at last alive to building something, but which, town hall or schoolhouse? Slow to wake to activity, Mapleton was so much the more violent in the discussion. It was John Dorrel's own boys and girls, working as no one had ever worked before for the cause of schoolhouse and schoolmaster, that had warmed the controversy to the fever pitch of this evening. Yet it was one of their own number who might undo all their efforts! The

Mentor Alliance, tense to a man, sprang up when at last they saw Spencer move to rise. Undoubtedly Hiram and Raymond and Sam were all severally on their feet before Spencer was on his, but it was Spencer whose rising Alan Campbell acknowledged, it was Spencer to whom he gave the floor.

Standing at the side, in the middle, Spencer faced five hundred pairs of eyes, but of these he saw only those of his friends of the Mentor Alliance, black and scowling, and those of his grandfather and of Mr. Dorrel. These two faces were both of them expectant and inscrutable. Not even Mr. Dorrel himself, perhaps, was going to understand what Spencer was going to say! Nevertheless a man must speak what he believes.

"I've come here to-night," began Spencer, "to say what my friends don't want me to say. I suppose I'm the only boy in Mapleton Academy who thinks Mapleton needs a town hall more than it needs a new schoolhouse. But since that's what I believe, that's what

I'll have to say. I know what everybody here who wants the new schoolhouse will think when I stand here and say I don't want it. They'll wonder why I can't, at least, keep still, if I can't say what's expected of me. I'll have to tell you all, then, why I can't keep still.

"It's my duty to speak because of the office I hold. The school chose me to be Editor-in-Chief of the school paper. A public servant owes it to his public to speak the truth as he sees it. Since the school chose me to responsibility, I have n't a right to keep my convictions to myself, even when the school itself wants me to keep still. I believe Mapleton needs a town hall more than a schoolhouse, and I'm here to say so, and to say why I think so.

"In the first place, I'd better tell a little something about myself. It is n't that I want to talk about myself, it's that, when you really stop to think about it, every man is always his own best argument. That's something I

learned at Mapleton Academy. Well, then, I came to this part of the country two years ago. I was sixteen, and I thought I knew a good deal. I'd been to school in New York from the time I was six, and when I came from New York to Lost Mountain, I thought I was as lost as the mountain! I'd never heard of Mapleton Academy before I came, but at the end of that summer I walked over here, sixteen miles, to see what it was like. I saw what it was like, and I stayed. Mapleton Academy is a school where every day you learn how much you don't know. The first year I learned how much I didn't know about books, and this year I'm learning how much I don't know about people. An editor's got to know as much as he can about both if he's to be useful to the public. But to be useful you've got first of all to be straight out with people about what's going on inside of you. Because all that you think, and all that you are, belong to the people who've chosen you to serve them. What I mean is

this. I'm editor of the school paper; therefore, I'm bigger than if I were merely myself; and because I'm bigger than myself, I've got to be truer to myself, to what I think, than if I merely belonged to myself. I belong to the school, and the town. I don't know whether anybody I'm speaking to will see exactly what I mean; I have n't met anybody yet who did see it, what I said in my editorials; but it's another of the things I've learned at Mapleton Academy.

"It seems to me the chief thing our Academy stands for is helping other people before you help yourself. Therefore, it seems to me the best way to be true to the teaching of our school is to help the town get a town hall before we ask the town to help us get a schoolhouse.

"But a second point is that we ought to be citizens first and schoolboys second, if we're to be true to what we've been taught at Mapleton Academy. The need of a town hall is greater than that of a schoolhouse. I've

been told I did n't understand the ideals of Mapleton Academy, because I can't see that those ideals need a better place to be taught in. To get others what they want before we get ourselves what we want, to be citizens and servants before we're anything else, those ideals have been taught in Mapleton Academy for twenty years if the roof has leaked, and they'll continue to be taught, and learned, even if the ceiling falls on our heads!

“But it's different with the public spirit of Mapleton. That needs a building to express itself in. Mapleton patriotism needs a building to look at, and a building to work in. We want to be able to say to the new citizens who are coming to us, and to the old who've forgotten how much we have to be proud of, — ‘Look at our town hall, see all we've put into it, its new post-office and its new library, and its new auditorium, and all the clean new public offices that make town work seem dignified.’ Such a building

could be the centre of our patriotism and from it we could learn how to feel like building and making other things, a park, perhaps, a hospital. People could say, — ‘Look at the spirit of our town expressed in our town hall.’

“But as for the need of expressing the spirit of our school in a new schoolhouse, that is different. Let us show our school spirit by first helping the town, for Mapleton Academy can get along without a schoolhouse. If we show our ideals first in public service, Mapleton will not need, when it wants to point to the spirit of its school, to say, ‘Look at our schoolhouse,’ but, ‘Look at our boys and girls!’

“For we boys and girls at Mapleton Academy can’t express our spirit in bricks and wood and mortar, not in that kind of a building. I think Mapleton ought to have a town hall, because it needs it; but we don’t need a schoolhouse, because we can learn to be public-spirited citizens without it!

“The hardest thing I’ve been told lately is

that I can't appreciate Mr. Dorrel's teaching, because I don't believe in a new schoolhouse. I've been told that working for a new schoolhouse for him was the only way to show our gratitude to our schoolmaster. It seems to me that if we've understood his teaching at all, we ought to understand that he'd rather we should work for the town's benefit than for his benefit.

"It seems to me the only way to show our gratitude to Mr. Dorrel is in building not a schoolhouse, but in building ourselves! They say I don't understand the spirit of the school, because I came as a stranger; but this is what I found — that the only way to show we've learned what Mapleton Academy teaches is by rearing, just as high and strong and fine as we can, for the service of our town and of our country, those characters that Mr. Dorrel is helping each one of us to build!"

Spencer Briggs did not resume his seat; instead, in an utter silence, he stalked down the crowded aisle and out.

At home in the Campbell sitting-room, Jeanie was seated near the table. She was very thoughtful to-night, sitting with quiet hands in her lap, not expecting the mass meeting to be over for a long time yet. The front door opened abruptly, then the hall door into the room. Spencer stood looking in, dizzied for an instant by the contrast, the heat and hurly-burly of the hour at Brown's Hall, the tense, opposing faces, the crowded masculine heads over which he could hear his own lonely words ringing, and here, — home, and a girl in white seated beneath a green-shaded lamp, lifting to him a sweet, waiting face.

"It's over," said Spencer. "I spoke. Nobody clapped. And my grandfather was there, too."

The two doors clanged shut as abruptly as they had opened, and Spencer was gone. Jeanie learned a great deal that evening about woman's lot, the way of waiting, for it was two hours afterward when Alan Camp-

bell came home. He, too, flung the door sharply open, then stood quiet, delaying his news, saying instead after half a minute, "It's pretty good in here."

He stood looking at the soft white dress, at the bright-gold head beneath the lamp, at the lifted face.

"Father, why don't you tell me what happened? What's the matter?"

"Matter?" muttered Alan Campbell; "matter? Matter is that I'm afraid you're growing up, laddie!"

"How funny you men are to-night!" And Jeanie's quick smile showed, to disappear at her eager inquiry, "Father, do tell me what happened!"

"Spencer spoke."

"What did he say?"

"What he thought."

Alan Campbell sank into a chair as if he were done with his report.

"But, father, do tell me, what did other people think about his speech, about Spencer?"

"They've been saying what they thought for two hours, but they all said the same thing."

"But what?"

"Well, old Jud Hyde put it neatly, just after Spencer cleared out. He said, 'That boy is his own best argument, that this town deserves a schoolhouse! *And* a town hall! I move we raise 'em both together!' And we're going to! Mapleton has waked up!"

On Tuesday morning, so early that the schoolhouse was still deserted and Spencer Briggs was still busy putting the office to rights for day occupation, there came a rap at the door. He opened, and, led by Hiram Scott, in filed the eight members of the Mentor Alliance. The faces of the eight were locked tight upon the sentiments they were about to deliver. The Alliance ranged itself against the wall; Spencer stood opposite, near Mr. Dorrel's desk chair.

"Spencer," began Hiram, "perhaps you can guess what we have come to say."

"Yes, I can guess."

Before Spencer's steady spectacles, the eight shifted about uneasily, even Hiram.

"Well, then, if you can guess, perhaps you'll understand without our saying it. It's not very easy to find words for it." But Hiram's tentative smile died before Spencer's solemnity, and Spencer's words.

"It will spare both of us pain if you don't say it."

"Pain!"

"It is painful, is n't it, always, to take sides, when friends disagree and disapprove?"

"Disagree and disapprove!"

"Please understand," said Spencer, "that I don't blame you. I can understand how you feel after yesterday. It is natural."

"You understand how we feel after yesterday?"

"Perfectly. It is quite unnecessary to explain."

Eight pairs of eyes, very wide, looked into Spencer's, also very wide.

Raymond's words leaped forth involuntarily: "Briggs, I believe you're still one who thinks he knows it all! There's no need for us to explain anything to you? It's quite unnecessary?"

"Quite!" Spencer's head was high and firm and proud.

Sharply Raymond turned, shoving and drawing the others out into the hall. "Well, then," said he, "wait until Friday for what we came to say! I suppose you remember what is going to happen on Friday?"

A caustic smile caught on Spencer's firm lips. "I do! The Vote of — Disapproval!"

The last to leave, Hiram turned at the door, seeking Spencer's eyes, but Spencer was gazing steadily at the wall. Spencer waited until the door closed, then he sank into Mr. Dorrel's chair. "I thought the worst was over last night," he said meditatively; "but missing one's friends seems to be something one does n't get over very quickly."

Spencer talked very little that week, not

even to Jeanie; yet all the talking that he did do was to Jeanie. Every one else he loftily avoided, but never yet had he found the Campbell sitting-room so comfortable a place. With Jeanie he could frankly show himself tired out. And Jeanie did not talk much to Spencer either; she merely fed him very well that week, and somehow contrived never to seem very busy, or self-occupied, but was often to be found seated tranquil and restful in her little rocking-chair, by the window, or beneath the lamp. There were all sorts of sparkles and twinkles at play in her gray eyes and about her lips. She could afford to wait for Friday, could Jeanie!

Friday came, and Friday afternoon, and at last four o'clock. Not a soul of all the High Room was absent on this Friday. Rule and regulation required, however, the withdrawal of two before the momentous meeting; in accordance, as soon as the schoolmaster, striding toward the door, had passed Spencer's seat, the Editor-in-Chief rose, and with

eyes straight ahead and unseeing, marched out in John Dorrel's wake, and down the stairs. At the office door the master turned about. "Coming in, Spencer? You've been harder than an eel for me to get hold of all this week."

"Did you want to see me, Mr. Dorrel?"

"I never want to see any one who does n't want to see me, except" — and the dark face brightened with a smile — "except in a case of sin or sorrow, which has n't been your case, Spencer, this week."

"I've been afraid that even you, Mr. Dorrel, did n't understand what I meant last Monday."

A quizzical, keen glance shot forth from beneath John Dorrel's eyelids. "You are hardly complimentary, Spencer, to my powers of understanding!"

"I thought you probably wanted the schoolhouse; everybody said you did. I could n't be perfectly sure, myself, whether you wanted it or not."

"I thought it wiser that no one should be perfectly sure what I wanted, for as I've watched the school this spring, I've thought that if boys and girls wish for a thing as they've wished and worked for this new schoolhouse, then they deserve and need it."

"But you yourself, Mr. Dorrel, was I right in thinking that you yourself would rather we worked for the town than for ourselves?"

"I myself?" The schoolmaster's eyes on Spencer's were strange and deep. "I myself?"

"Have I understood," pleaded Spencer, "your ideal for us? Did I understand — you?"

A strange glow illumined the brown face with mysticism. The schoolmaster's voice was vibrant. "As no one whom I have ever taught ever understood, before!" he answered.

Suddenly above their heads a tornado tore loose from quiet; it ripped wide the High

Room doors, it came surging down the stairs.

"I think, Spencer, that noise means that you are wanted."

John Dorrel opened the office door, and in they poured, but Jeanie was in advance.

"Spencer, you've got it! Unanimously!"

"What?"

"The Vote of Approval. It did n't take long!"

They were everywhere around him, in the office, out in the hall, massed on the stairs, everywhere, the glowing faces, the outstretched hands of his friends!

Spencer turned white. "I never dreamed," he stammered out, "I never dreamed you'd ever feel like this, toward me, after I went against you all, last Monday night!"

His bright, bewildered spectacles turned from one to another. "Why?" his lips demanded.

"In this school we happen to like courage!" explained Sam Klein's voice from the hall.

"In this school we happen to like independence," shrilled Patrick Murphy.

"What you would not let us explain on Monday morning," said Raymond Ellis, "was that we happen to like — you!"

"I thought you would think my speech had lost you the new schoolhouse!"

A great glad laugh rang up to the roof. "But you won us the schoolhouse! Don't you know the town decided that last Monday, after your speech?"

"And the town hall?" questioned Spencer.

"That, too, — both!" they shouted.

"Have you been asleep, Spencer," asked a quizzical voice, "this week, when all Mapleton has been waking up?"

"Spencer," Hiram's tense voice was close to Spencer's ear, but unheard of others, "will you shake hands with me? I'm not saying 'deserter' now, because I'm thinking 'patriot'!"

Out shot Spencer's hand, out broke his wonderful smile, but still he questioned.

“But I did n’t say what you wanted me to, last Monday. Do you really think I’m one of you, one with you?”

“I guess,” said little Patrick, “we’re wanting to be one with you as public-spirited citizens, as you taught us to be, last Monday night.”

“But,” murmured Spencer, “it was somebody else who taught *me* that, once.”

Then the crowding hands began to clutch Spencer’s and to shake and shake, pressing in from the hall, down from the stairs. And in that half-hour Spencer Briggs knew that the grip of comrade hands was something he could never again be happy without. No matter of how many bigger papers he might live to be Editor-in-Chief, and no matter if again, as life might demand sacrifice, he might have to risk foregoing that grasp for the sake of speaking forth his own convictions.

Long before the school had dispersed, Jeanie had slipped away, too happy to linger,

preferring to wait by herself for the coming of her men-folk home. But Jeanie was not yet quite grown-up, not quite inured to waiting. It was a forbidden thing, always, to approach Alan Campbell in the Chronicle office on a Friday evening, the day before the Chronicle's weekly appearance. Jeanie held out until five-thirty, but then she had to seek her father—had to! She stole cautiously back to the sanctum behind the noisy presses.

“Father?”

“What does this mean?”

“Are n't you nearly done?”

“What does this mean?”

“Father, I had to come. Spencer has won the Vote of Approval, unanimously! The school said, among a lot of other things, that he's the most public-spirited editor we ever had.”

“You are a bold boy to come here, on Friday, to tell me all that has happened to Spencer Briggs.”

“Because I could n't wait for the next that's to happen to Spencer Briggs.”

"What?"

"You'll take him into the office here next year, won't you now, father, and you'll let me tell him so to-night?"

"I will *not*!"

"Father, but you will take him on the Chronicle? you will?"

"I made up my mind on that subject some months ago, in January, on the night of the debate."

"Oh, but, father, that's not fair! Think what Spencer has done since then!"

"I made up my mind on that night," reiterated Alan Campbell; then rose wrathfully from his busy editorial chair, and turned his tall girl about by the shoulders, with a teasing, tender little tweak of a loose red curl. "And that's all a girl gets who interrupts her father on press night! Run home!"

Nothing to do but go.

"Evening, Miss Campbell," said a grim, arresting voice.

"Mr. Pelham!" exclaimed Jeanie.

"The same!"

Then Jeanie's joyous pride of the afternoon came pouring back on her. "O Mr. Pelham, do you know what's happened? Spencer has won the Vote of Approval as Editor-in-Chief, won it unanimously!"

"Is that something rather good?"

"It's the highest compliment the school can pay an Editor-in-Chief! Unanimously!"

"Spencer did n't mention it," mused Spencer's grandfather.

"Have you seen him?"

"Just now. Had a little business with him; that little plan of mine I mentioned to you once."

"O Mr. Pelham, what plan?"

"I've just been inviting your Editor-in-Chief to come back to Lost Mountain next year, and let me make a farmer of him."

"Oh, what did he say?"

"Said he'd come, and said he'd stay!"

CHAPTER X

THE CAREER

RIGHT then and there, with the clattering Chronicle office behind her, with the little May clouds touched by the gold of the dipping sun high over her head, did Jeanie Campbell have it out with Spencer's grandfather! She faced him with blazing eyes.

"I won't let Spencer go back to a farm on Lost Mountain!"

"Won't let?" grinned Stephen Pelham; "who's given you the say-so about my grandson?"

"When you've worked and worked over people, and waited and waited, then you have a right to a say-so! I've worked and waited for Spencer all this year!"

"I've worked and waited for him all his life!"

"Well, then," flashed Jeanie, "I don't

see why you can't be nice to him right now."

"Nice to him?"

"Mr. Pelham, let him have his chance!"

"What chance?"

"The chance I think I've got for him for next year, — to show what's in him!"

"Can't show what's in him on a farm on Lost Mountain?"

"A boy like Spencer show what's in him on Lost Mountain!"

"Humph! I recollect knowing a boy like Spencer once, who did show what was in him on Lost Mountain!"

"I don't believe there ever was a boy just like Spencer! You don't appreciate him if you think so. He's waked up since you knew him, last summer, and now he's got to have his chance next year!"

"You sure you've got hold of that chance for him, whatever it is?"

"No-o-o, not quite sure yet, but," and the flame surged to Jeanie's cheeks, "I'll make

it happen now, for Spencer has earned it; I'll make father and I'll make Spencer, too! Mr. Pelham, you shan't get Spencer away from me, after the way I've hoped and tried. Spencer Briggs shan't go back to fizzle out, now, on Lost Mountain! I'm his friend if you are his grandfather! And you shan't have him!"

"Well, one thing I see Spencer's learned this year!"

"What?"

"Learned to make a friend!"

"I'm not the only friend he's made. So, Mr. Pelham," suddenly Jeanie's face was all coaxing, "why can't you be his friend, too, and not interfere with his career?"

"Spencer's free to choose."

"Free to choose my chance for him," glowed Jeanie.

"When you get it! Provided —"

"Provided —"

"That you'll let him be free to choose my chance for him, which I've got already."

Jeanie looked baffled.

"Come," pressed Stephen Pelham, "that's fair enough, to let Spencer choose between our plans for him."

"It's fair," hesitated Jeanie, "but it is n't — right. For you don't understand Spencer. I do. I'm his friend."

"And I'm — not?"

They stood looking at each other with searching eyes. Over Jeanie's clear face a great puzzlement was growing.

"What now?" asked Stephen Pelham, studying her in grim amusement.

"You look," explained Jeanie with knotted, puzzled forehead, "so like Spencer sometimes that it mixes me all up in what I'm thinking and saying."

"And you're Spencer's friend. Suppose now that you'd ever come to think Spencer's grandfather Spencer's friend, how about your being friends with the old fellow then as well as the young one?"

"You're very queer," said Jeanie, "you

and Spencer. You make me want to smile just when I want to be mad."

"That will do for a starter," rejoined Stephen Pelham; "we'll come to shaking hands yet over Spencer, you and I."

Here certainly was challenge enough for Jeanie now to make her father give Spencer the chance for which she had pleaded with Spencer's grandfather! But Jeanie had regained some of her tact, in spite of the need of immediate action; she did not pursue her cause on press night. She let her father eat his usual hurried, silent Friday supper, and escape back to the office unassailed by any importunate daughters. It was just as well. There are times when fathers enjoy their own initiative.

Spencer slipped away from Jeanie and the Campbell sitting-room very early that evening, on a secret errand. He was to say nothing to anybody, so Alan Campbell, hailing him from the door of the Chronicle office that afternoon, had enjoined,—to say no-

thing to anybody, but to appear in the dusky sanctum back of the presses at seven-thirty on this Friday evening.

The two editors sat with heads bending close so that their voices might be heard above the clatter of the Friday printing.

“Spencer, I have n’t much time to talk to-night, but yet to-night is the time to talk if I’m going to have any domestic peace over Sunday. Also, in a case of man to man like this, I prefer to do my own talking rather than to let my daughter do it for me. Not to waste words, I’ve been watching the Senior class of Mapleton Academy for ten years, and I’ve been watching you for one year. I need an assistant editor. Will you accept the position, your duties to begin on the first of September?”

Spencer’s eyes and mouth grew round.

“To be,” he breathed, “a real editor, so soon!”

“You’ve been a real editor for some months.”

"Only on a school paper, only on the Mentor."

"Does that seem to you a small matter?"

"It does not seem to me a small matter, now, but I should think it would seem a small matter to you, who have a real paper."

"The editing of a school paper may be the best preparation for editing a real one. It depends on how you take it."

"Have I taken it, then, do you think, Mr. Campbell, in the right way?"

"Since January; not before."

"Since — that night?"

"Since you burned your theories of editorial responsibility and took to practicing them. I made up my mind to offer you this position on the night you burned your monograph."

"I wasted half this year on my monograph."

"It was not time wasted. You learned an editor's duties in theory first. It would only have been time wasted if you had never

put the ideal into practice. You called your monograph preparation for your life work. It was, indirectly. Only a man stops talking about a life work when once he has one!

"I have been watching you, Spencer. The first time I made up my mind that you should be my assistant was when I saw you burn your monograph; the second time I made up my mind was when I heard you say, the only way to be true to public service is to be true to private convictions; and the third time I made up my mind was when I heard you put that sentiment into practice, in your speech, last Monday night. I have been watching you, Spencer Briggs, and you have passed my examination; a hard one, for I would be as careful in choosing a man for my Chronicle as in choosing a man for my daughter.

"Will you be my assistant, Spencer, on the Chronicle?"

Silence.

"Do you accept the position?"

"No," said Spencer slowly, "for I have promised my grandfather to be a farmer, on Lost Mountain!"

It was perhaps to be characteristic of Spencer Briggs's march through life that people would always be hailing him from doorways to turn aside from his straight-ahead path. On Saturday morning it was his grandfather's voice that waylaid him, a stentorian summons from the door of the Twin Pines. The low, dusky inn parlor afforded privacy for conversation.

"Anything happened since I saw you," asked Stephen Pelham, with abrupt curiosity, "to make you want to take back that promise to come to the farm? I heard rumors of a chance of another sort you might have."

"I shall not take back my promise, grandfather."

"But anything happened to make you want to? 'Bout time you and I got right down to understanding each other, Spencer."

"I thought we understood each other

better than we ever had before when you asked me yesterday to come back to the mountain."

"You wanted to come?"

"I was glad you wanted me to," answered Spencer, "because I had thought you did n't think I amounted to much."

"Have had some opinion of what you amounted to ever since that essay of yours a year ago, 'The Two Sieges of the Civil War,' the prize essay!"

"You read it!"

"Know it by heart."

"Grandfather!"

"For a smart boy, Spencer, you're a dumb one!"

"But you never said anything about that essay. I did n't suppose you cared."

"Me not care about writing! But neither did you say anything about those newspapers of mine you sneaked off with."

"I did n't suppose you cared anything about them."

"Best collection in four counties. Happens there's nothing I do care so much about as writing and papers!"

"You, grandfather! But farming! I thought you cared everything for that."

"Second choice. Had to. Luck tied me to Lost Mountain. So made the best of it. Reading and writing my only way of getting off the mountain."

"Writing?"

"What's your opinion now of Old Fogy's style?"

"Are you, grandfather, Old Fogy! Can you, did you, write like that?"

"You think that's something like writing, then, that 'Back-to-the-Farm' stuff? I kind of liked playing with farmer talk like that; not so much worse than my plain everyday talk; I only put it on a little. Farmer talk suits farmer thought. What did you think of the thought now?"

"You know that your arguments convinced me that I ought to go back to the farm!"

"Well," exploded Stephen Pelham, "I'll be blowed! That was the last thing I was after!"

"Then what were you after? Why were you so angry the other day when in the Mentor I agreed with you? And you did want me to go back to the farm when you asked me to yesterday?"

"Kind of puzzled, sonny, are n't you, as to what's inside your old grandfather?"

"Yes, I am. But I want to do what you want me to."

"You do want to do what I want you to?"
As once before hungry eyes searched hungry eyes.

"Yes, grandfather."

"Well, that was what I wanted to find out, maybe, — if you'd do what I wanted if I asked you. I kind of hankered after that, after a — after a grandson. That showed me you were that, for you meant, and you mean it."

"Yes."

"Well, then, I did n't mean and I don't

mean to let you come back to the farm! It's the last thing I want of you. And why was I so mad about your coming around to my 'Back-to-the-Farm' arguments? Because I want you to go out into the world where I could n't go, and I want you to be sure it's the thing for you to do. I wanted you to find arguments for your own side, because every young fellow, that's ever to get to the top of himself, has got to be dead sure at the start that he's on the right road. Old Fogy's reasoning is straight enough for a lot of folks, but not for you, and I wanted you to find answers to him, for I don't want farming for my grandson — nor shilly-shally either."

Spencer's wide, blank eyes and parted lips were something of a reward to one who loved teasing.

"'Nother thing I wanted to find out yesterday: I'll tell you, Spencer; once I knew a boy like you — 'an ambitious young man.' That boy is still walking around in my boots. He wanted to write, he wanted to be an edi-

tor. He studied out the pith of every newspaper he could find. But he had to stay all his life a farmer on Lost Mountain. All that I can say for that young fellow is that he stayed on top of the mountain and he did n't let the mountain get on top of him. I wanted to know if you had the grit that fellow had. It's all he has got, the man in my boots, grit! So've you! I've proved it now, and that's enough.

"Now, man, are you ready to tell me, have n't you got a chance at something better than farming? But wait a minute till I tell you another thing. Know what I've had up my sleeve for you all year, my plan? I want you to take the cash that grew out of the old farm on Lost Mountain, and go off somewhere and learn to be the newspaper man, the writer fellow, I could n't be. Understand a bit better, now, what's inside your old grandfather?"

"I don't need to go away. I've a chance to stay here and learn. Mr. Campbell asked me

last night to be his assistant on the Chronicle."

"So that" — Stephen Pelham drew a long whistle — "was the girl's plan for you!"

"Whose? Jeanie's? It was her father's plan."

"Spencer, you're a smart boy, but where that girl's concerned you'll never be so smart as your grandfather at putting two and two together, even if I am only an old farmer on Lost Mountain."

"But it's a great deal, I think," said Spencer gravely, "to be a farmer on Lost Mountain."

"Those were n't your sentiments when you came from the city two years ago. You've got more than two years' growth since then. What was it, Spencer, since then, that's taught you your respect for farming?"

Calm and judicial the young voice. "You!" said Herbert Spencer Briggs.

Out sprang two firm hands, and gripped each other. Then and there Spencer proved that he had learned how to shake hands!

"And now," remarked old Stephen Pelham with a puckered grin, "I'm going to look up that girl and see if she's ready to shake with me, too!"

It was a momentous Saturday morning for Jeanie Campbell, crowded with conversations that made her thoughtful, and cast light back on the past winter, illuminating much that she had not understood. People seemed to want to have everything clear with Jeanie on this morning. Her father came first, talking more fully and more eagerly than his wont, explaining his long reticence in regard to a choice of an assistant, summing it up finally, "You see, laddie, I'm as fond of following my own line with people as you are, without hint or help from anybody. Remember you're a chip of the old block, and trust your daddy to mind other people's business the best he can, just as you would, especially when he knows you want him to!"

An hour later, old Stephen Pelham was

experiencing for himself the spell of Jeanie's sitting-room, he, too, wanting to explain to Jeanie. But it did n't need very much explanation, for two pairs of eyes began to twinkle too early in the talk for many words to lag after when understanding had run before. As once before, Jeanie found her hand grasped in a horny grip. Shining and merry, Jeanie's eyes were lifted beneath her red-gold curls. "Mr. Pelham, do you know, I think I'm going to like you almost as well as I do Spencer!"

And, third gentleman to claim Jeanie's sitting-room and sympathy, came H. Spencer Briggs himself, he also, like the other two, eager to talk it all over. Listening to all three, Jeanie formulated for herself a thought that touched her lips with fleeting humor. "I guess all men are always boys, and always hungry, hungry for some woman-person to understand them. I guess perhaps that's what I'm for."

Spencer Briggs was still pouring forth

much Spencer Briggs, when Jeanie sprang up. "Let's go and tell Mr. Dorrel all about everything!" she cried.

Sometimes the schoolmaster's Saturdays were a matter of sacred privacy, with gentle Mrs. Dorrel as a most effective dragon of protection before the study door; but, luckily, to-day the big library-study was open to visitors. It was a great cheery room, with numerous windows to make it sunny in spite of the many dark-browed book-cases.

In all the freedom of a blithe May Saturday, how a boy and girl could talk, seated one to right and one to left of the deep reading-chair that held the schoolmaster's slim, gray-flanneled form! Yet all they said, in all that hour, he had perhaps guessed before, John Dorrel with the dark, deep-seeing eyes. It is not only the old who love retrospect. There is nothing young folks love better, provided it is a brief retrospect, of a week, a month, a year, and provided it is a

retrospect of accomplishment, of success. So Jeanie and Spencer talked until the twelve o'clock whistle boomed, and they had to rise, though even then, with the odor of Mrs. Dorrel's dinner warning them of time, they lingered a little.

"It is queer," said Jeanie, "this year is nearly over, and yet it still has the feel of beginnings, even more than in September."

"It has been a year of beginnings for me," said Spencer. "Looking back, I feel as if this year I had begun my education, my education in people."

"That was what we wanted, was n't it, Jeanie," said the schoolmaster, "once upon a time, long ago, in September? I have observed, Spencer, that people have always learned a good deal by being Editor-in-Chief of the Mapleton Mentor."

"I could never have been an Editor-in-Chief if Jeanie had not helped me, from beginning to end. I see that now. And it makes me feel" — here honest amusement

touched Spencer's over-earnest eyes and mouth — "it makes me feel that I don't amount to so much as I thought I did, in September."

The mysticism touched John Dorrel's brown eyes. "That, Spencer, is the way being helped sometimes makes us feel," he said.

"Oh, but Spencer," cried Jeanie, "I don't feel that way about it at all, because you amount to so much more than you did in September that I don't feel, now, as if you'd ever need my helping any more."

"And that, Jeanie," said the schoolmaster quietly, "is the way helping sometimes makes us feel."

A sudden solemnity shot through the sun and sparkle of the May noon. The highest compliment people ever paid John Dorrel was that sometimes they forgot his presence altogether.

Something new and strange had touched Jeanie Campbell's May-morning face, had

darkened and deepened her wide gray eyes. A little quiver ran along her lips that smiled.

"Spencer, once I wanted you to say 'thank you' to me, for everything; but now I think I never want you to say 'thank you' any more."

Spencer's man-voice rang in answer, his hand was stretched toward Jeanie's for a comrade grip. "But all the same I do say 'thank you' now, for everything!"

And that reader of faces, standing forgotten there, saw that in that moment Jeanie Campbell ceased forever to be a boy, as for a second time that morning Spencer Briggs demonstrated that he had learned how to shake hands!

THE END

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